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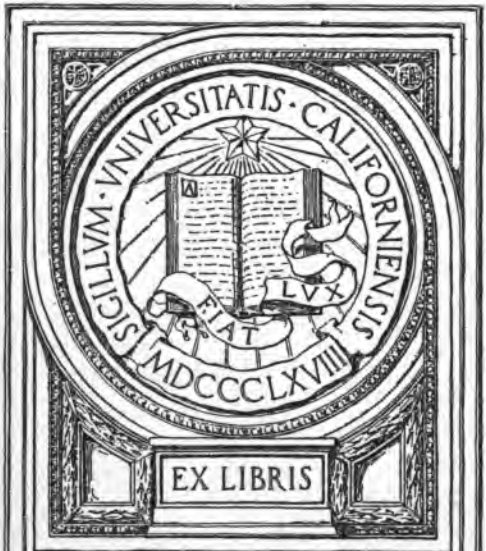
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BUSINESS CORRESPONDENCE

VOLUME I

HOW TO WRITE THE BUSINESS LETTER: *24 chapters on preparing to write the letter and finding the proper viewpoint; how to open the letter, present the proposition convincingly, make an effective close; how to acquire a forceful style and inject originality; how to adapt selling appeal to different prospects and get orders by letter—proved principles and practical schemes illustrated by extracts from 217 actual letters*

A. W. SHAW COMPANY
Wabash Ave. and Madison St., Chicago
461 Fourth Ave., New York
43-44 Shoe Lane, London, E. C.
1917

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UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

What You Can *Do* With a POSTAGE STAMP

LAST YEAR *fifteen billion letters were handled by the post office—one hundred and fifty for every person. Just as a thousand years ago practically all trade was cash, and now only seven per cent involves currency, so nine-tenths of the business is done today by letter while even a few decades ago it was by personal word. You can get your prospect, turn him into a customer, sell him goods, settle complaints, investigate credit standing, collect your money—*ALL BY LETTER. *And often better than by word of mouth. For, when talking, you speak to only one or two; by letter you can talk to a hundred thousand in a sincere, personal way. So the letter is the* MOST IMPORTANT TOOL *in modern business—good letter writing is the business man's* FIRST REQUIREMENT.

THERE is a firm in Chicago, with a most interesting bit of inside history. It is not a large firm. Ten years ago it consisted of one man. Today there are some three hundred employees, but it is still a one-man business. It has never employed a salesman on the road; the head of the firm has never been out to call on any of his customers.

But here is a singular thing: you may drop in to see a business man in Syracuse or San Francisco, in Jacksonville or Walla Walla, and should you casually mention this man's name, the chances are the other will reply: "Oh, yes. I know

him very well. That is, I've had several letters from him and I feel as though I know him."

Sitting alone in his little office, this man was one of the first to foresee, ten years ago, the real possibilities of the letter. He saw that if he could write a man a thousand miles away the right kind of a letter he could do business with him as well as he could with the man in the next block.

So he began *talking* by mail to men whom he thought might buy his goods—talking to them in sane, human, you-and-me English. Through those letters he sold goods. Nor did he stop there. In the same human way he collected the money for them. He adjusted any complaints that arose. He did everything that any business man could do with customers. In five years he was talking not to a thousand men but to a million. And today, though not fifty men in the million have ever met him, this man's personality has swept like a tidal wave across the country and left its impression in office, store and factory—through letters—letters *alone*.

This instance is not cited because it marks the employment of a new medium, but because it shows how the letter has become a universal implement of trade; how a commonplace tool has been developed into a living business-builder.

The letter is today the greatest potential creator and transactor of business in the world. But wide as its use is, it still lies idle, an undeveloped possibility, in many a business house where it might be playing a powerful part.

The letter is a universal implement of business—that is what gives it such great possibilities. It is the servant of every business, regardless of its size or of its character. It matters not what department may command its use—wherever there is a business in which men must communicate with each other, the letter is found to be the first and most efficient medium.

Analyze for a moment the departments of your own business. See how many points there are at which you could use *right* letters to good advantage. See if you have not been overlooking some opportunities that the letter, at a small cost, will help develop.

Do you sell goods? The letter is the greatest salesman known to modern business. It will carry the story you have to tell wherever the mail goes. It will create business and bring back orders a thousand miles to the very hand it left. If you are a

retailer, the letter will enable you to talk your goods, your store, your service, to every family in your town, or it will go further and build a counter across the continent for you.

If you are a manufacturer or wholesaler selling to the trade, the letter will find prospects and win customers for you in remote towns that salesmen cannot profitably reach.

But the letter is not only a direct salesman, it is a supporter of every personal sales force. Judiciously centered upon a given territory, letters pave the way for the salesman's coming; they serve as his introduction. After his call, they keep reminding the prospect or customer of the house and its goods.

Or, trained by the sales manager upon his men, letters keep them in touch with the house and key up their loyalty. With regular and special letters, the sales manager is able to extend his own enthusiasm to the farthest limits of his territory.

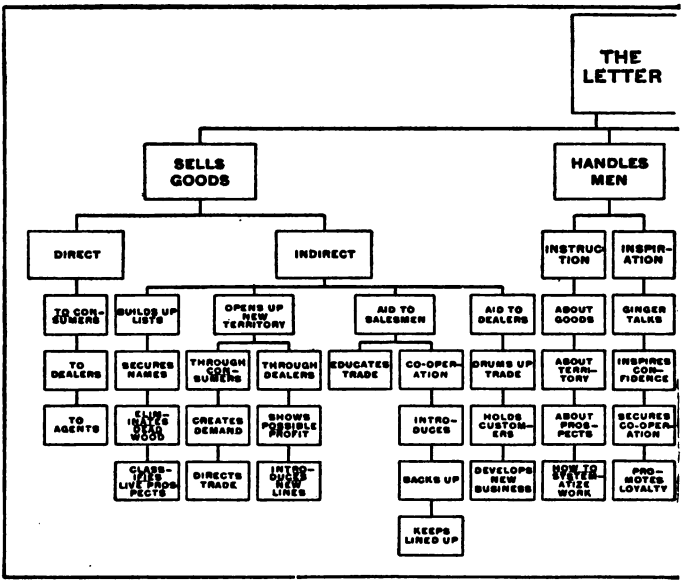
So in every phase of selling, the letter makes it possible for you to keep your finger constantly upon the pulse of trade.

If you are a wholesaler or manufacturer, letters enable you to keep your dealers in line. If you are a retailer, they offer you a medium through which to keep your customers in the proper mental attitude toward your store, the subtle factor upon which retail credit so largely depends. If you sell on instalments, letters automatically follow up the accounts and maintain the inward flow of payments at a fraction of what any other system of collecting entails.

Do you have occasion to investigate the credit of your customers? The letter will quietly and quickly secure the information. Knowing the possible sources of the data you desire you can send forth half a dozen letters and a few days later have upon your desk a comprehensive report upon the worth and reliability of almost any concern or individual asking credit favors. And the letter will get this information where a representative would often fail because it comes full-fledged in the frankness and dignity of your house.

Does your business involve in any way the collecting of money? Letters today bring in ten dollars for every one that collectors receive on their monotonous round of homes and cashiers' cages. Without the collection letter the whole credit system would be toppling about our ears.

Do you find it necessary to adjust the complaint of a client or a customer? A diplomatic letter at the first intimation of



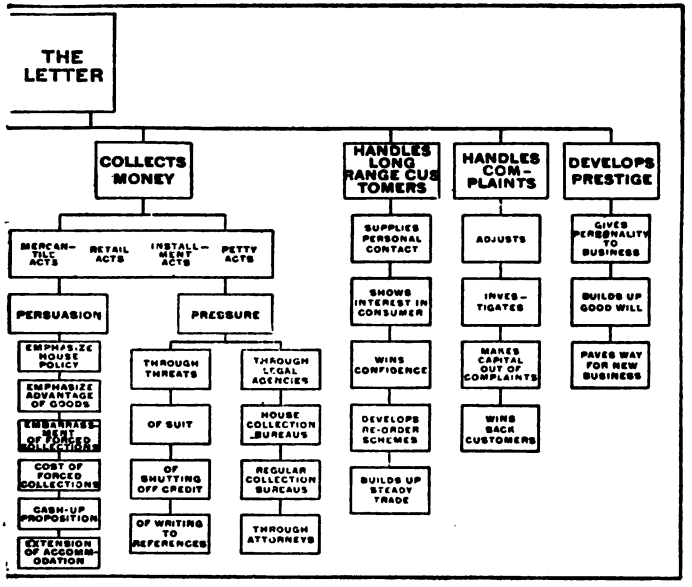
The practical uses of the business letter are almost infinite; selling goods, with distant customers, developing the prestige of the house—there is

dissatisfaction will save many an order from cancellation. It will soothe ruffled feelings, wipe out imagined grievances and even lay the basis for firmer relations in the future.

So you may run the gamut of your own business or any other. At every point that marks a transaction between concerns or individuals, you will find some way in which the letter rightly used, can play a profitable part.

There is a romance about the postage stamp as fascinating as any story—not the romance contained in sweet scented notes, but the romance of big things accomplished; organizations developed, businesses built, great commercial houses founded.

In 1902 a couple of men secured the agency for a firm manufacturing extracts and toilet preparations. They organized an agency force through letters and within a year the manufacturers were swamped with business, unable to fill the orders.



handling men, adjusting complaints, collecting money, keeping in touch scarcely an activity of modern business that cannot be carried on by letter

Then the men added one or two other lines, still operating from one small office. Soon a storage room was added; then a packing and shipping room was necessary and additional warehouse facilities were needed. Space was rented in the next building; a couple of rooms were secured across the street, and one department was located over the river—wherever rooms could be found.

Next the management decided to issue a regular mail-order catalogue and move to larger quarters where the business could be centered under one roof. A floor in a new building was rented—a whole floor. The employees thought it was extravagance; the managers were dubious, for when the business was gathered in from seven different parts of the city, there was still much vacant floor space.

One year later it was again necessary to rent outside space. The management then decided to erect a permanent home and today the business occupies two large buildings and the firm is

known all over the country as one of the big factors of mail-order merchandising.

It has all been done by postage stamps.

When the financial world suddenly tightened up in 1907 a wholesale dry goods house found itself hard pressed for ready money. The credit manager wrote to the customers and begged them to pay up at once. But the retailers were scared and doggedly held onto their cash. Even the merchants who were well rated and whose bills were due, played for time.

The house could not borrow the money it needed and almost in despair the president sat down and wrote a letter to his customers; it was no routine collection letter, but a heart-to-heart talk, telling them that if they did not come to his rescue the business that he had spent thirty years in building would be wiped out and he would be left penniless because he could not collect *his* money. He had the bookkeepers go through every important account and they found that there was hardly a customer who had not, for one reason or another, at some time asked for an extension of credit. And to each customer the president dictated a personal paragraph, reminding him of the time accommodation had been asked and granted. Then the appeal was made straight from the heart: "Now, when I need help, not merely to tide me over a few weeks but to save me from ruin, will you not strain a point, put forth some special effort to help me out, just as I helped you at such and such a time?"

"If we can collect $20,000," he had assured his associates, "I know we can borrow $20,000, and that will probably pull us through."

The third day after his letters went out several checks came in; the fourth day the cashier banked over $22,000; within ten days $68,000 had come in, several merchants paying up accounts that were not yet due; a few even offered to "help out the firm."

The business was saved—by postage stamps.

Formality to the winds; stereotyped phrases were forgotten; traditional appeals were discarded and a plain talk, man-to-man, just as if the two were closeted together in an office brought hundreds of customers rushing to the assistance of the house with which they had been dealing.

Sixty-eight thousand dollars collected within two weeks when money was almost invisible—and by letter. Truly there is romance in the postage stamp.

Twenty-five years ago a station agent wrote to other agents along the line about a watch that he could sell them at a low price. When an order came in he bought a watch, sent it to the customer and used his profit to buy stamps for more letters. After a while he put in each letter a folder advertising charms, fobs and chains; then rings, cuff buttons and a general line of jewelry was added. It soon became necessary to give up his position on the railroad and devote all his time to the business and one line after another was added to the stock he carried.

Today the house that started in this way has customers in the farthermost parts of civilization; it sells every conceivable product from toothpicks to automobiles and knockdown houses. Two thousand people do nothing but handle mail; over 22,000 orders are received and filled every day; 36,000 men and women are on the payroll.

It has all been done by mail. Postage stamps bring to the house every year business in excess of $65,000,000.

One day the head correspondent in an old established wholesale house in the east had occasion to go through some files of ten and twelve years before. He was at once struck with the number of names with which he was not familiar—former customers who were no longer buying from the house. He put a couple of girls at work making a list of these old customers and checking them up in the mercantile directories to see how many were still in business.

Then he sat down and wrote to them, asking as a personal favor that they write and tell him why they no longer bought of the house; whether its goods or service had not been satisfactory, whether some complaint had not been adjusted. There must be a reason, would they not tell him personally just what it was?

Eighty per cent of the men addressed replied to this personal appeal; many had complaints that were straightened out; others had drifted to other houses for no special reason. The majority were worked back into the "customer" files. Three years later the accounting department checked up the orders received from these re-found customers. The gross was over a million dollars. The business all sprung from one letter.

Yes, there is romance in the postage stamp; there is a latent power in it that few men realize—a power that will remove commercial mountains and erect industrial pyramids.

The ADVANTAGES Of Doing *Business* By Letter

LETTERS HAVE *their limitations and their advantages. The correspondent who is anxious to secure the best results should recognize the inherent weakness of a letter due to its lack of personality in order to reinforce these places. Equally essential is an understanding of the letter's great* NATURAL ADVANTAGES *so that the writer can turn them to account—make the most of them. It possesses qualities the personal representative lacks and this chapter tells how to take advantage of them*

WHILE it is necessary to know how to write a strong letter, it is likewise essential to understand both the limitations of letters and their advantages. It is necessary, on the one hand, to take into account the handicaps that a letter has in competition with a personal solicitor. Offsetting this are many distinct advantages the letter has over the salesman. To write a really effective letter, a correspondent must thoroughly understand its carrying capacity.

A salesman often wins an audience and secures an order by the force of a dominating personality. The letter can minimize this handicap by an attractive dress and force attention through the impression of quality. The letter lacks the animation of a person but there can be an individuality about its appearance that will assure a respectful hearing for its message.

The personal representative can time his call, knowing that under certain circumstances he may find his man in a favorable frame of mind, or even at the door he may decide it is the part of

diplomacy to withdraw and wait a more propitious hour. The letter cannot back out of the prospect's office; it cannot shape its canvass to meet the needs of the occasion or make capital out of the mood or the comments of the prospect.

The correspondent cannot afford to ignore these handicaps under which his letter enters the prospect's office. Rather, he should keep these things constantly in mind in order to overcome the obstacles just as far as possible, reinforcing the letter so it will be prepared for any situation it may encounter at its destination. Explanations must be so clear that questions are unnecessary; objections must be anticipated and answered in advance; the fact that the recipient is busy must be taken into account and the message made just as brief as possible; the reader must be treated with respect and diplomatically brought around to see the relationship between *his* needs and *your* product.

But while the letter has these disadvantages, it possesses qualities that the salesman lacks. The letter, once it lies open before the man to whom you wish to talk, is your counterpart, speaking in your words just as you would talk to him if you were in his office or in his home. That is, the *right* letter. It reflects your personality and not that of some third person who may be working for a competitor next year.

The letter, if clearly written, will not misrepresent your proposition; its desire for a commission or for increased sales will not lead it to make exaggerated statements or unauthorized promises. The letter will reach the prospect just as it left your desk, with the same amount of enthusiasm and freshness. It will not be tired and sleepy because it had to catch a midnight train; it will not be out of sorts because of the poor coffee and the cold potatoes served at the Grand hotel for breakfast; it will not be peeved because it lost a big sale across the street; it will not be in a hurry to make the 11:30 local; it will not be discouraged because a competitor is making inroads into the territory.

You have the satisfaction of knowing that the letter is immune from these ills and weaknesses to which flesh is heir and will deliver your message faithfully, promptly, loyally. It will not have to resort to clever devices to get past the glass door, nor will it be told in frigid tones by the guard on watch to call some other day. The courtesy of the mail will take your letter to the proper authority. If it goes out in a dignified dress and presents its proposition concisely it is assured of a considerate hearing.

It will deliver its message just as readily to some Garcia in the mountains of Cuba as to the man in the next block. The salesman who makes a dozen calls a day is doing good work; letters can present your proposition to a hundred thousand prospects on the one forenoon. They can cover the same territory a week later and call again and again just as often as you desire. You cannot time the letter's call to the hour but you can make sure it reaches the prospect on the day of the week and the time of the month when he is most likely to give it consideration. You know exactly the kind of canvass every letter is making; you know that every call on the list is made.

The salesman must look well to his laurels if he hopes to compete successfully with the letter as a selling medium. Put the points of advantage in parallel columns and the letter has the best of it; consider, in addition, the item of expense and it is no wonder letters are becoming a greater factor in business.

The country over, there are comparatively few houses that appreciate the full possibilities of doing business by mail. Not many appreciate that certain basic principles underlie letter writing, applicable alike to the beginner who is just struggling to get a foothold and to the great mail-order house with its tons of mail daily. They are not mere theories; they are fundamental principles that have been put to the test, proved out in thousands of letters and on an infinite number of propositions.

The correspondent who is ambitious to do by mail what others do by person, must understand these principles and how to apply them. He must know the order and position of the essential elements; he must take account of the letter's impersonal character and make the most of its natural advantages.

Writing letters that pull is not intuition; it is an art that anyone can acquire. But this is the point: *it must be acquired.* It will not come to one without effort on his part. Fundamental principles must be understood; ways of presenting a proposition must be studied, various angles must be tried out; the effectiveness of appeals must be tested· new schemes for getting attention and arousing interest must be devised; clear, concise description and explanation must come from continual practice; methods for getting the prospect to order now must be developed. It is not a game of chance; there is nothing mysterious about it—nothing impossible, it is solely a matter of study, hard work and the intelligent application of proved-up principles.

Gathering Material And *Picking* Out TALKING Points

ARGUMENTS—*prices, styles, terms, quality or whatever they may be—are effective only when used on the right "prospect" at the right time. The correspondent who has some message of value to carry gathers together a mass of "raw material"—facts, figures and specifications on which to base his arguments—and then he selects the particular talking points that will appeal to his prospect. By systematic tests, the relative values of various arguments may be determined almost to a scientific nicety. How to gather and classify this material and how to determine what points are most effective is the subject in this chapter*

AN architect can sit down and design your house on paper, showing its exact proportions, the finish of every room, the location of every door and window. He can give specific instructions for building your house but before you can begin operations you have got to get together the brick and mortar and lumber—all the material used in its construction.

And so the correspondent-architect can point out the way to write a letter: how to begin, how to work up interest, how to present argument, how to introduce salesmanship, how to work in a clincher and how to close, but when you come to writing the letter that applies to your particular business you have first to gather the material. And just as you select cement or brick or lumber according to the kind of house you want to build, so the correspondent must gather the partic-

ular kind of material he wants for his letter, classify it and arrange it so that the best can be quickly selected.

The old school of correspondents—and there are many graduates still in business—write solely from their own viewpoint. Their letters are focused on "our goods," "our interests" and "our profits." But the new school of letter writers keep their own interests in the background. Their sole aim is to focus on the viewpoint of the reader; find the subjects in which he is interested, learn the arguments that will appeal to him, bear down on the persuasion that will induce him to act at once.

And so the successful correspondent should draw arguments and talking points from many sources; from the house, from the customer, from competitors, from the news of the day from his knowledge of human nature.

"What shall I do first?" asked a new salesman of the general manager.

"Sell yourself," was the laconic reply, and every salesman and correspondent in the country could well afford to take this advice to heart.

Sell yourself; answer every objection that you can think of, test out the proposition from every conceivable angle; measure it by other similar products; learn its points of weakness and of superiority, know its possibilities and its limitations. Convince yourself; sell yourself, and then you will be able to sell others.

The first source of material for the correspondent is in the house itself. His knowledge must run back to the source of raw materials: the kinds of materials used, where they come from, the quality and the quantity required, the difficulties in obtaining them, the possibilities of a shortage, all the problems of mining or gathering the raw material and getting it from its source to the plant—a vast storehouse of talking points.

Then it is desirable to have a full knowledge of the processes of manufacture; the method of handling work in the factory, the labor saving appliances used, the new processes that have been perfected, the time required in turning out goods, the delays that are liable to occur—these are all pertinent and may furnish the strongest kind of selling arguments. And it is equally desirable to have inside knowledge of the methods in the sales department, in the receiving room and the shipping room. It is necessary for the correspondent to know the firm's facilities for handling orders; when deliveries can be promised,

what delays are liable to occur, how goods are packed, the condition in which they are received by the customer, the probable time required in reaching the customer.

Another nearby source of information is the status of the customer's account; whether he is slow pay or a man who always discounts his bills. It is a very important fact for the correspondent to know whether the records show an increasing business or a business that barely holds its own.

Then a most important source—by many considered the most valuable material of all—is the customer himself. It may be laid down as a general proposition that the more the correspondent knows about the man to whom he is writing, the better appeal he can make.

In the first place, he wants to know the size and character of the customer's business. He should know the customer's location, not merely as a name that goes on the envelope, but some pertinent facts regarding the state or section. If he can find out something regarding a customer's standing and his competition, it will help him to understand his problems.

Fortunate is the correspondent who knows something regarding the personal peculiarities of the man to whom he is writing. If he understands his hobbies, his cherished ambition his home life, he can shape his appeal in a more personal way. It is comparatively easy to secure such information where salesmen are calling on the trade, and many large houses insist upon their representatives' making out very complete reports, giving a mass of detailed information that will be valuable to the correspondent.

Then there is a third source of material, scarcely less important than the study of the house and the customer, and that is a study of the competitors—other firms who are in the same line of business and going after the same trade. The broad-gauged correspondent never misses an opportunity to learn more about the goods of competing houses—the quality of their products, the extent of their lines, their facilities for handling orders, the satisfaction that their goods are giving, the terms on which they are sold and which managers are hustling and up to the minute in their methods.

The correspondent can also find information, inspiration and suggestion from the advertising methods of other concerns—not competitors but firms in a similar line.

Then there are various miscellaneous sources of information. The majority of correspondents study diligently the advertisements in general periodicals; new methods and ideas are seized upon and filed in the "morgue" for further reference.

Where a house travels a number of men, the sales department is an excellent place from which to draw talking points. Interviewing salesmen as they come in from trips and so getting direct information, brings out talking points which are most helpful as are those secured by shorthand reports of salesmen's conventions.

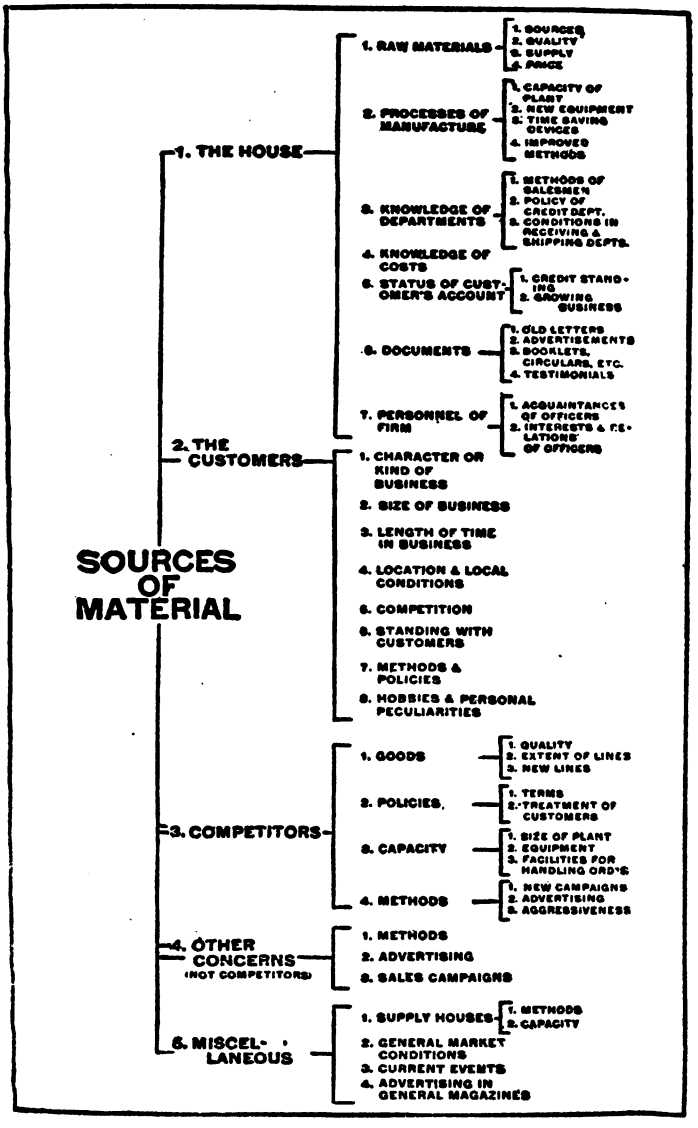
Many firms get convincing arguments by the use of detailed forms asking for reports on the product. One follow-up writer gets valuable pointers from complaints which he terms "reverse" or "left-handed" talking points.

Some correspondents become adept in coupling up the news of the day with their products. A thousand and one different events may be given a twist to connect the reader's interest with the house products and supply a reason for "buying now." The fluctuation in prices of raw materials, drought, late seasons, railway rates, fires, bumper crops, political discussions, new inventions, scientific achievements—there is hardly a happening that the clever correspondent, hard pressed for new talking points, cannot work into a sales letter as a reason for interesting the reader in his goods.

Gathering the information is apt to be wasted effort unless it is classified and kept where it is instantly available. A notebook for ideas should always be at hand and men who write important sales letters should keep within reach scrapbooks, folders or envelopes containing "inspirational" material to which they can readily refer.

The scrapbook, a card index or some such method for classifying and filing material is indispensable. Two or three pages or cards may be devoted to each general subject, such as raw material, processes of manufacture, methods of shipping, uses, improvements, testimonials, and so forth, and give specific information that is manna for the correspondent. The data may consist of notes he has written, bits of conversation he has heard, extracts from articles he has read, advertisements of other concerns and circulars—material picked up from a thousand sources.

One versatile writer uses heavy manila sheets about the size of a letterhead and on these he pastes the catch-lines, the


SOURCES OF MATERIAL
1. THE HOUSE
1. RAW MATERIALS
1. SOURCES
2. QUALITY
3. SUPPLY
4. PRICE
2. PROCESSES OF MANUFACTURE
1. CAPACITY OF PLANT
2. NEW EQUIPMENT
3. TIME SAVING DEVICES
4. IMPROVED METHODS
3. KNOWLEDGE OF DEPARTMENTS
1. METHODS OF SALESMEN
2. POLICY OF CREDIT DEPT.
3. CONDITIONS IN RECEIVING & SHIPPING DEPTS.
4. KNOWLEDGE OF COSTS
5. STATUS OF CUSTOMER'S ACCOUNT
1. CREDIT STANDING
2. GROWING BUSINESS
6. DOCUMENTS
1. OLD LETTERS
2. ADVERTISEMENTS
3. BOOKLETS, CIRCULARS, ETC.
4. TESTIMONIALS
7. PERSONNEL OF FIRM
1. ACQUAINTANCES OF OFFICERS
2. INTERESTS & RELATIONS OF OFFICERS
2. THE CUSTOMERS
1. CHARACTER OR KIND OF BUSINESS
2. SIZE OF BUSINESS
3. LENGTH OF TIME IN BUSINESS
4. LOCATION & LOCAL CONDITIONS
5. COMPETITION
6. STANDING WITH CUSTOMERS
7. METHODS & POLICIES
8. HOBBIES & PERSONAL PECULIARITIES
3. COMPETITORS
1. GOODS
1. QUALITY
2. EXTENT OF LINES
3. NEW LINES
2. POLICIES.
1. TERMS
2. TREATMENT OF CUSTOMERS
3. CAPACITY
1. SIZE OF PLANT
2. EQUIPMENT
3. FACILITIES FOR HANDLING ORDERS
4. METHODS
1. NEW CAMPAIGNS
2. ADVERTISING
3. AGGRESSIVENESS
4. OTHER CONCERNS (NOT COMPETITORS)
1. METHODS
2. ADVERTISING
3. SALES CAMPAIGNS
5. MISCELLANEOUS
1. SUPPLY HOUSES
1. METHODS
2. CAPACITY
2. GENERAL MARKET CONDITIONS
3. CURRENT EVENTS
4. ADVERTISING IN GENERAL MAGAZINES

unique phrases, the forceful arguments, the graphic descriptions and statistical information that he may want to use. Several sheets are filled with metaphors and figures of speech that he may want to use some time in illuminating a point. These sheets are more bulky than paper but are easier to handle than a scrapbook, and they can be set up in front of the writer while he is working.

Another correspondent has an office that looks as if it had been decorated with a crazy quilt. Whenever he finds a word, a sentence, a paragraph or a page that he wants to keep he pins or pastes it on the wall.

"I don't want any systematic classification of this stuff," he explains, "for in looking for the particular word or point that I want, I go over so many other words and points that I keep all the material fresh in my mind. No good points are buried in some forgotten scrapbook; I keep reading these things until they are as familiar to me as the alphabet."

It may be very desirable to keep booklets, pamphlets and bulky matter that cannot be pasted into a book or onto separate sheets in manila folders. This is the most convenient way for classifying and filing heavy material. Or large envelopes may be used for this purpose.

Another favorite method of arrangement in filing talking points for reference is that of filing them in the order of their pulling power. This, in many propositions, is considered the best method. It is not possible, out of a list of arguments to tell, until after the try-out always, which will pull and which will not. Those pulling best will be worked the most. Only as more extensive selling literature is called for will the weaker points be pressed into service.

No matter what system is used, it must be a growing system; it must be kept up to date by the addition of new material, picked up in the course of the day's work. Much material is gathered and saved that is never used, but the wise correspondent does not pass by an anecdote, a good simile, a clever appeal or forcible argument simply because he does not see at the moment how he can make use of it.

In all probability the time will come when that story or that figure of speech will just fit in to illustrate some point he is trying to make. Nor does the correspondent restrict his material to the subject in which he is directly interested, for ideas spring

from many sources and the advertisement of some firm in an entirely different line may give him a suggestion or an inspiration that will enable him to work up an original talking point. And so it will be found that the sources of material are almost unlimited—limited in fact, only by the ability of the writer to see the significance of a story, a figure of speech or an item of news, and connect it up with his particular proposition.

But gathering and classifying material available for arguments is only preliminary work. A wide knowledge of human nature is necessary to select from these arguments those that will appeal to the particular prospect or class of prospects you are trying to reach.

"When you sit down to write an important letter, how do you pick out your talking points?"

This question was put to a man whose letters have been largely responsible for an enormous mail-order business.

"The first thing I do," he replied, "is to wipe my pen and put the cork in the ink bottle."

His answer summarizes everything that can be said about selecting talking points: before you start to write, study the proposition, picture in your mind the man to whom you are writing, get his viewpoint, pick out the arguments that will appeal to him and then write your letter to that individual.

The trouble with most letters is that they are not aimed carefully, the writer does not try to find the range but blazes away in hopes that some of the shots will take effect.

There are a hundred things that might be said about this commodity that you want to market. It requires a knowledge of human nature, and of salesmanship to single out the particular arguments and the inducement that will carry most weight with the individual to whom you are writing. For even if you are preparing a form letter it will be most effective if it is written directly at some individual who most nearly represents the conditions, the circumstances and the needs of the class you are trying to reach.

Only the new correspondent selects the arguments that are nearest at hand—the viewpoints that appeal to him. The high score letter writers look to outside sources for their talking points. One of the most fruitful sources of information is the men who have bought your goods. The features that induced them to buy your product, the things that they talk

about are the very things that will induce others to buy that same product. Find out what pleases the man who is using your goods and you may be sure that this same feature will appeal to the prospect.

It is equally desirable to get information from the man who did not buy your machine—learn his reasons, find out what objections he has against it; where, in his estimation, it fell short of his requirements; for it is reasonably certain that other prospects will raise the same objections and it is a test of good salesmanship to anticipate criticisms and present arguments that will forestall such objections.

In every office there should be valuable evidence in the files—advertisements, letters, circulars, folders and other publicity matter that has been used in past campaigns. In the most progressive business houses, every campaign is thoroughly tested out; arguments, schemes, and talking points are proved up on test lists, the law of averages enabling the correspondent to tell with mathematical accuracy the pulling power of every argument he has ever used. The record of tests; the letters that have fallen down and the letters that have pulled, afford information that is invaluable in planning new campaigns. The arguments and appeals that have proved successful in the past can be utilized over and over again on new lists or given a new setting and used on old lists.

The time has passed when a full volley is fired before the ammunition is tested and the range found. The capable letter writer tests out his arguments and proves the strength of his talking points without wasting a big appropriation. His letters are tested as accurately as the chemist in his laboratory tests the strength or purity of material that is submitted to him for analysis. How letters are keyed and tested is the subject of another chapter.

No matter what kind of a letter you are writing, keep this fact in mind: never use an argument on the reader that does not appeal to you, the writer. Know your subject; know your goods from the source of the raw material to the delivery of the finished product. And then in selling them, pick out the arguments that will appeal to the reader; look at the proposition through the eyes of the prospect; sell yourself the order first and you will have found the talking points that will sell the prospect.

When You *Sit Down* To WRITE

THE WEAKNESS *of most letters is not due to ungrammatical sentences or to a poor style, but to a wrong viewpoint: the writer presents a proposition from his own viewpoint instead of that of the reader. The correspondent has gone far towards success when he can* VISUALIZE *his prospect, see his environments, his needs, his ambitions, and* APPROACH *the* PROSPECT *from* THIS ANGLE. *This chapter tells how to get the class idea; how to see the man to whom you are writing and that equally important qualification, how to get into the mood for writing—actual methods used by effective correspondents*

WHEN you call on another person or meet him in a business transaction you naturally have in mind a definite idea of what you want to accomplish. That is, if you expect to carry your point. You know that this end cannot be reached except by a presentation which will put your proposition in such a favorable light, or offer such an inducement, or so mould the minds of others to your way of thinking that they will agree with you. And so before you meet the other person you proceed to plan your campaign, your talk, your attitude to fit his personality and the conditions under which you expect to meet.

An advertising man in an eastern mining town was commissioned to write a series of letters to miners, urging upon them the value of training in a night school about to be opened.

Now he knew all about the courses the school would offer and he was strong on generalities as to the value of education. But try as he would, the letters refused to take shape. Then suddenly he asked himself, "What type of man am I really trying to reach?"

And there lay the trouble. He had never met a miner face to face in his life. As soon as he realized this he reached for his hat and struck out for the nearest coal breaker. He put in two solid days talking with miners, getting a line on the average of intelligence, their needs—the point of contact. Then he came back and with a vivid picture of his man in mind, he produced a series of letters that glowed with enthusiasm and sold the course.

A number of years ago a printer owning a small shop in an Ohio city set out to find a dryer that would enable him to handle his work faster and without the costly process of "smut-sheeting." He interested a local druggist who was something of a chemist and together they perfected a dryer that was quite satisfactory and the printer decided to market his product. He wrote fifteen letters to acquaintances and sold eleven of them. Encouraged, he got out one hundred letters and sold sixty-four orders. On the strength of this showing, his banker backed him for the cost of a hundred thousand letters and fifty-eight thousand orders were the result.

The banker was interested in a large land company and believing the printer must be a veritable wizard in writing letters, made him an attractive offer to take charge of the advertising for the company's Minnesota and Canada lands.

The man sold his business, accepted the position—and made a signal failure. He appealed to the printers because he knew their problems—the things that lost them money, the troubles that caused them sleepless nights—and in a letter that bristled with shop talk he went straight to the point, told how he could help them out of at least one difficulty—and sold his product.

But when it came to selling western land he was out of his element. He had never been a hundred miles away from his home town; he had never owned a foot of real estate; "land hunger" was to him nothing but a phrase; the opportunities of a "new country" were to him academic arguments—they were not realities.

He lost his job. Discouraged but determined, he moved to Kansas where he started a small paper—and began to study the

real estate business. One question was forever on his lips: "Why did you move out here?" And to prospective purchasers, "Why do you want to buy Kansas land? What attracts you?"

Month after month he asked these questions of pioneers and immigrants. He wanted their viewpoint, the real motive that drove them westward. Then he took in a partner, turned the paper over to him and devoted his time to the real estate business. Today he is at the head of a great land company and through his letters and his advertising matter he has sold hundreds of thousands of acres to people who have never seen the land. But he tells them the things they want to know; he uses the arguments that "get under the skin."

He spent years in preparing to write his letters and bought and sold land with prospects "face to face" long before he attempted to deal with them by letter. He talked and thought and studied for months before he dipped his pen into ink.

Now before he starts a letter, he calls to mind someone to whom he has sold a similar tract in the past; he remembers how each argument was received; what appeals struck home and then, in his letter, he talks to that man just as earnestly as if his future happiness depended upon making the one sale.

The preparation to write the letter should be two-fold: knowing your product or proposition and knowing the man you want to reach. You have got to see the proposition through the eyes of your prospect. The printer sold his ink dryer because he looked at it from the angle of the buyer and later he sold real estate, but not until he covered up his own interest and presented the proposition from the viewpoint of the prospect.

Probably most successful letter writers, when they sit down to write, consciously or unconsciously run back over faces and characteristics of friends and acquaintances until they find someone who typifies the class they desire to reach. When writing to women, one man always directs his appeal to his mother or sister; if trying to interest young men he turns his mind back to his own early desires and ambitions.

Visualize your prospect. Fix firmly in your mind some one who represents the class you are trying to reach; forget that there is any other prospect in the whole world; concentrate your attention and selling talk on this one individual.

"If you are going to write letters that pull," says one successful correspondent, "you have got to be a regular spiritual-

ist in order to materialize the person to whom you are writing; bring him into your office and talk to him face to face."

"The first firm I ever worked for," he relates, "was Andrew Campbell & Son. The senior Campbell was a conservative old Scotchman who had made a success in business by going cautiously and thoroughly into everything he took up. The only thing that would appeal to him would be a proposition that could be presented logically and with the strongest kind of arguments to back it up. The son, on the other hand, was thoroughly American; ready to take a chance, inclined to plunge and try out a new proposition because it was new or unique; the novelty of a thing appealed to him and he was interested because it was out of the ordinary.

"Whenever I have an important letter to write, I keep these two men in mind and I center all my efforts to convince them; using practical, commonsense arguments to convince the father, and enough snappy 'try-it-for-yourself' talk to win the young man."

According to this correspondent, every firm in a measure represents these two forces, conservative and radical, and the strongest letter is the one that makes an appeal to both elements.

A young man who had made a success in selling books by mail was offered double the salary to take charge of the publicity department of a mail-order clothing house. He agreed to accept—two months later. Reluctantly the firm consented.

The firm saw or heard nothing from him until he reported for work. He had been shrewd enough not to make the mistake of the printer who tried to sell land and so he went to a small town in northern Iowa where a relative owned a clothing store and started in as a clerk. After a month he jumped to another store in southern Minnesota. At each place—typical country towns—he studied the trade and when not waiting on customers busied himself near some other clerk so he could hear the conversation, find out the things the farmers and small town men looked for in clothes and learn the talking points that actually sell the goods.

This man who had a position paying $6,000 a year waiting for him spent two months at $9 a week preparing to write. A more conceited chap would have called it a waste of time, but this man thought that he could well afford to spend eight weeks and sacrifice nearly a thousand dollars learning to write letters and advertisements that would sell clothes by mail.

At the end of the year he was given a raise that more than made up his loss. Nor is he content, for every year he spends a few weeks behind the counter in some small town, getting the viewpoint of the people with whom he deals, finding a point of contact, getting local color and becoming familiar with the manner of speech and the arguments that will get orders.

When he sits down to write a letter or an advertisement he has a vivid mental picture of the man he wants to interest; he knows that man's process of thinking, the thing that appeals to him, the arguments that will reach right down to his pocket-book.

A man who sells automatic scales to grocers keeps before him the image of a small dealer in his home town. The merchant had fallen into the rut, the dust was getting thicker on his dingy counters and trade was slipping away to more modern stores.

"Mother used to send me on errands to that store when I was a boy," relates the correspondent, "and I had been in touch with it for twenty years. I knew the local conditions; the growth of competition that was grinding out the dealer's life.

"I determined to sell him and every week he received a letter from the house—he did not know of my connection with it—and each letter dealt with some particular problem that I knew he had to face. I kept this up for six months without calling forth a response of any kind; but after the twenty-sixth letter had gone out, the manager came in one day with an order—and the cash accompanied it. The dealer admitted that it was the first time he had ever bought anything of the kind by mail. But I knew *his* problems, and I connected them up with our scales in such a way that he *had* to buy.

"Those twenty-six letters form the basis for all my selling arguments, for in every town in the country there are merchants in this same rut, facing the same competition, and they can be reached only by connecting their problems with our scales."

No matter what your line may be, you have got to use some such method if you are going to make your letters pull the orders. Materialize your prospect; overcome every objection and connect *their* problems with *your* products.

When you sit down to your desk to write a letter, how do you get into the right mood? Some, like mediums, actually work themselves into a sort of trance before starting to write. One man insists that he writes good letters only when he gets mad—which is his way of generating nervous energy.

Others go about it very methodically and chart out the letter, point by point. They analyze the proposition and out of all the possible arguments and appeals, carefully select those that their experience and judgment indicate will appeal strongest to the individual whom they are addressing. On a sheet of paper one man jots down the arguments that may be used and by a process of elimination, scratches off one after another until he has left only the ones most likely to reach his prospect.

Many correspondents keep within easy reach a folder or scrapbook of particularly inspiring letters, advertisements and other matter gathered from many sources. One man declares that no matter how dull he may feel when he reaches the office in the morning he can read over a few pages in his scrapbook and gradually feel his mind clear; his enthusiasm begins to rise and within a half hour he is keyed up to the writing mood.

A correspondent in a large mail-order house keeps a scrapbook of pictures—a portfolio of views of rural life and life in small towns. He subscribes to the best farm papers and clips out pictures that are typical of rural life, especially those that represent types and show activities of the farm, the furnishings of the average farm house—anything that will make clearer the environment of the men and women who buy his goods. When he sits down to write a letter he looks through this book until he finds some picture that typifies the man who needs the particular article he wants to sell and then he writes to that man, keeping the picture before him, trying to shape every sentence to impress such a person. Other correspondents are at a loss to understand the pulling power of his letters.

A sales manager in a typewriter house keeps the managers of a score of branch offices and several hundred salesmen gingered up by his weekly letters. He prepares to write these letters by walking through the factory, where he finds inspiration in the roar of machinery, the activity of production, the atmosphere of actual creative work.

There are many sources of inspiration. Study your temperament, your work and your customers to find out under what conditions your production is the easiest and greatest. It is neither necessary nor wise to write letters when energies and interest are at a low ebb, when it is comparatively easy to stimulate the lagging enthusiasm and increase your power to write letters that bring results.

How To *Begin* A BUSINESS Letter

FROM ITS SALUTATION *to its signature a business letter must hold the interest of the reader or fail in its purpose. The most important sentence in it is obviously the* FIRST *one, for upon it depends whether the reader will dip further into the letter or discard it into the waste basket.* IN THAT FIRST SENTENCE THE WRITER HAS HIS CHANCE. *If he is really capable, he will not only attract the reader's interest in that first sentence, but put him into a receptive mood for the message that follows. Here are some sample ways of "opening" a business letter*

NO MATTER how large your tomorrow morning's mail, it is probable that you will glance through the first paragraph of every letter you open. If it catches your attention by reference to something in which you are interested, or by a clever allusion or a striking head line or some original style, it is probable you will read at least the next paragraph or two. But if these paragraphs do not keep up your interest the letter will be passed by unfinished. If you fail to give the letter a full reading the writer has only himself to blame. He has not taken advantage of his opportunity to carry your interest along and develop it until he has driven his message home, point by point.

In opening the letter the importance of the salutation must not be ignored. If a form letter from some one who does not

know Mr. Brown, personally, starts out "Dear Mr. Brown," he is annoyed. A man with self-respect resents familiarity from a total stranger—someone who has no interest in him except as a possible customer for his commodity.

If a clerk should address a customer in such a familiar manner it would be looked upon as an insult. Yet it is no uncommon thing to receive letters from strangers that start out with one of these salutations:

"Dear Benson:"
"My dear Mr. Benson:"
"Respected Friend:"
"Dear Brother:"

While it is desirable to get close to the reader; and you want to talk to him in a very frank manner and find a point of personal contact, this assumption of friendship with a total stranger disgusts a man before he begins your letter. You start out with a handicap that is hard to overcome, and an examination of a large number of letters using such salutations are enough to create suspicion for all; too often they introduce some questionable investment proposition or scheme that would never appeal to the hard-headed, conservative business man.

"Dear Sir" or "Gentlemen" is the accepted salutation, at least until long correspondence and cordial relations justify a more intimate greeting. The ideal opening, of cours , strikes a happy medium between too great formality on th e one hand and a cringing servility or undue familiarity on the other hand.

No one will dispute the statement that the reason so many selling campaigns fail is not because of a lack of merit in the propositions themselves but because they are not effectively presented.

For most business men read their letters in a receptive state of mind. The letterhead may show that the message concerns a duplicating machine and the one to whom it is addressed may feel confident in his own mind that he does not want a duplicating machine. At the same time he is willing to read the letter, for it may give him some new idea, some prac-

tical suggestion as to how such a device would be a good investment and make money for him. He is anxious to learn how the machine may be related to his particular problems. But it is not likely that he has time or sufficient interest to wade through a long letter starting out:

"We take pleasure in sending you under separate cover catalogue of our latest models of Print-Quicks, and we are sure it will prove of interest to you."

The man who has been sufficiently interested in an advertisement to send for a catalogue finds his interest cooling rapidly when he picks up a letter that starts out like this:

"We have your valued inquiry of recent date, and we take pleasure in acknowledging," and so forth.

Suppose the letter replying to his inquiry starts out in this style:

"The picture on page 5 of our catalogue is a pretty fair one, but I wish you could see the desk itself."

The reader's attention is immediately gripped and he reaches for the catalogue to look at the picture on page five.

To get attention and arouse interest, avoid long-spun introductions and hackneyed expressions. Rambling sentences and loose paragraphs have proved the graveyard for many excellent propositions. Time-worn expressions and weather-beaten phrases are poor conductors, there is too much resistance-loss in the current of the reader's interest.

The best way to secure attention naturally depends upon the nature of the proposition and the class of men to whom the letter is written.

One of the most familiar methods is that known to correspondents as the "mental shock." The idea is to put

at the top of the letter a "Stop! Look! Listen!" sign. Examples of this style are plentiful:

THIS MEANS MONEY TO YOU--BIG MONEY

LET ME PAY YOUR NEXT MONTH'S RENT

READ IT--ON OUR WORD IT'S WORTH READING

STOP SHOVELING YOUR MONEY INTO THE FURNACE

NOW LISTEN! I WANT A PERSONAL WORD WITH YOU

CUT YOUR LIGHT BILL IN HALF

Such introductions have undoubtedly proved exceedingly effective at times, but like many other good things, the idea has been overworked. The catch-line of itself sells no goods and to be effective it must be followed by trip-hammer arguments. Interest created in this way is hard to keep up.

The correspondent may use a catch-line, just as the barker at a side show uses a megaphone—the noise attracts a crowd but it does not sell the tickets. It is the "spiel" the barker gives that packs the tent. And so the average man is not influenced so much by a bold catch-line in his letters as by the paragraphs that follow. Some correspondents even run a catch-line in red ink at the top of the page, but these yellow journal "scare-heads" fall short with the average business proposition.

Then attention may be secured, not by a startling sentence but by the graphic way in which a proposition is stated. Here is an opening that starts out with a clear-cut swing:

"If we were to offer you a hundred-dollar bill as a gift we take it for granted that you would be interested. If, then, our goods will mean to you many times that sum every year isn't the proposition still more interesting? Do you not want us to demonstrate what we say? Are you not willing to invest a little of your time watching this demonstration?"

This reference to a hundred-dollar bill creates a concrete image in the mind of the reader. The letters that first used this attention-getter proved so effective that the idea has been

worked over in many forms. Here is the effective way one correspondent starts out:

"If this letter were printed on ten-dollar bills it could scarcely be more valuable to you than the offer it now contains. You want money; we want your business. Let's go into partnership."

Here is a letter sent out by a manufacturer of printing presses:

"If your press feeders always showed up on Monday morning; if they were never late, never got tired, never became careless, never grumbled about working overtime, you would increase the output of your plant, have less trouble, make more money--that is why you will be interested in the Speedwell Automatic feeding attachment."

This paragraph summarizes many of the troubles of the employing printer. It "gets under his skin," it is graphic, depicting one of the greatest problems of his business and so he is certain to read the letter and learn more about the solution that it offers.

This same paragraph might also be used as a good illustration of that effective attention-getter, the quick appeal to the problems that are of most concern to the reader. The one great trouble with the majority of letters is that they start out with "we" and from first to last have a selfish viewpoint:

"We have your valued inquiry of recent date and, as per your request, we take pleasure in enclosing herewith a copy of our latest catalogue," and so forth.

Don't begin by talking about yourself, your company, your business, your growth, your progress, your improved machinery, your increased circulation, your newly invested capital. The reader has not the faintest interest in you or your business until he can see some connection between it and his own welfare. By itself it makes no play whatever to his attention; it must first be coupled up with his problems and his needs.

Begin by talking about him, his company, his business, his progress, his troubles, his disappointments, his needs, his ambition.

That is where he lives day and night. Knock at that door and you will find him at home. Touch upon some vital need in his business—some defect or tangle that is worrying him—some weak spot that he wants to remedy—some cherished ambition that haunts him—and you will have rung the bell of his interest. A few openings that are designed to get the reader's attention and induce him to read farther, are shown here:

"Your letter reached me at a very opportune time as I have been looking for a representative in your territory."

- - -

"By using this code you can telegraph us for any special article you want and it will be delivered at your store the following morning. This will enable you to compete with the large mail-order houses. It will give you a service that will mean more business and satisfied customers."

- - -

"You can save the wages of one salesman in every department of your store. Just as you save money by using a typewriter, addressograph, adding machine, cash register and other modern equipments, so you can save it by installing a Simplex."

- - -

"Don't you want to know how to add two thousand square feet of display to some department of your store in exchange for twenty feet of wall?"

- - -

"Yes, there is a mighty good opening in your territory for hustling salesmen. You will receive a complete outfit by express so you can start at once."

Keep the interest of the reader in mind. No matter how busy he is, he will find time to read your letter if you talk about his problems and his welfare.

Some correspondents, having taken only the first lesson in business letter writing, over-shoot the mark with a lot of "hot air"

that is all too apparent. Here is the opening paragraph from one of these writers:

"By the concise and business-like character of your letter of inquiry we know that you would be very successful in the sale of our typewriters. This personal and confidential circular letter is sent only to a few of our selected correspondents whom we believe can be placed as general agents."

As a matter of fact, the gentleman to whom this letter was sent had written with a lead pencil on a post card asking for further particulars regarding propositions to salesmen. It is a good illustration of the form letter gone wrong. The inquirer had not written a concise and business-like letter and there was not the slightest reason why the firm should send him a personal and confidential proposition and if the proposition were really confidential, it would not be printed in a circular letter.

Here is the opening paragraph of a letter typical in its lack of originality and attention-getting qualities:

"We are in receipt of yours of recent date and in reply wish to state that you will find under separate cover a copy of our latest catalogue, illustrating and describing our Wonder Lighting System. We are sure the information contained in this catalogue will be of interest to you."

Not only is the paragraph devoid of interest-getting features, but it is written from the wrong standpoint—"we" instead of "you."

Re-write the paragraph and the reader is certain to have his interest stimulated:

"The catalogue is too large to enclose w.th this letter and so you will find it in another envelope. You will find on page 4 a complete description of the Wonder System of Lighting, explaining just how it will cut down your light bill. This system is adapted to use in stores, factories, public halls and homes--no matter what you want you will find it listed in this catalogue."

Then it is possible to secure attention by some familiar allusion, some reference to facts with which the reader is familiar:

"In our fathers' day, you know, all fine tableware was hand forged--that meant quality but high cost."

The opening statement secures the assent of the reader even before he knows what the proposition is. Sometimes an allusion may be introduced that does not come home so pointedly to the reader but the originality of the idea appeals to him. By its very cleverness he is led to read further. Here is the beginning of a letter sent out by an advertising man and commercial letter writer:

"The Prodigal Son might have started home much sooner had he received an interesting letter about the fatted calf that awaited his coming.

"The right sort of a letter would have attracted his attention, aroused his interest, created a desire and stimulated him to action."

Then there is the opening that starts out with an appeal to human interest. It is the one opening where the writer can talk about himself and still get attention and work up interest:

"Let me tell you how I got into the mail order business and made so much money out of it."

- - -

"I wish I could have had the opportunity thirty years ago that you have today. Did I ever tell you how I started out?"

- - -

"I have been successful because I have confidence in other people."

- - -

"I was talking to Mr. Phillips, the president of our institution, this morning, and he told me that you had written to us concerning our correspondence course."

These personal touches bring the writer and reader close together and pave the way for a man-to-man talk.

Then there is a way of getting attention by some novel idea, something unusual in the typography of the letter, some unusual idea. One mail-order man puts these two lines written with a typewriter across the top of his letterheads:

"EVEN IF YOU HAD TO PAY TO SECURE A COPY OF THIS LETTER --OR HAD TO TAKE A DAY OFF TO READ IT--YOU COULD NOT AFFORD TO FAIL TO CONSIDER IT."

Few men would receive a letter like that without taking the time to read it, at least hurriedly, and if the rest of the argument is presented with equal force the message is almost sure to be carried home.

Another mail-order house sending out form letters under one-cent postage, inserts this sentence directly under the date line, to the right of the name and address:

"Leaving our letter unsealed for postal inspection is the best proof that our goods are exactly as represented."

The originality of the idea impresses one. There is no danger that the letter will be shunted into the waste basket without a reading.

There are times when it is necessary to disarm the resentment of the reader in the very first paragraph, as, for instance, when there has been a delay in replying to a letter. An opening that is all too common reads:

"I have been so extremely busy that your letter has not received my attention."

Or the writer may be undiplomatic enough to say:

"Pardon delay. I have been so much engaged with other matters that I have not found time to write you."

The considerate correspondent is always careful that his opening does not rub the wrong way. One writer starts out by saying:

"You have certainly been very patient with me in the matter of your order and I wish to thank you for this."

Here are the first five paragraphs of a two-page letter from an investment firm. The length of the letter is greatly against it and the only hope the writer could have, would be in getting the attention firmly in the opening paragraph:

"My dear Mr. Wilson:

"I want to have a personal word with you to explain this matter.

"I don't like to rush things; I believe in taking my time. I always try to do it. I want you to do the same thing, but there are exceptions to all rules: sometimes we cannot do things just the way we want to and at the same time reap all the benefits.

"Here is the situation. I went out to the OIL FIELDS OF CALIFORNIA and while there I DID DEVOTE PLENTY AND AMPLE TIME TO PROPER INVESTIGATION. I went into the thing thoroughly. I went there intending to INVEST MY OWN MONEY if I found things right.

"My main object in leaving for California was to INVESTIGATE FOR MY CLIENTS, but I would not advise my clients to invest THEIR money unless the situation was such that I would invest MY OWN money. That's where I stand--first, last and all the time.

"I don't go into the torrid deserts in the heat of the summer and stay there for weeks just for fun. There is no fun or pleasure to it, let me tell you. It's hard work when one investigates properly, and I surely did it right. I guess you know that."

The letter is not lacking in style; the writer knows how to put things forcibly, but he takes up half a page of valuable space before he says anything vital to his subject. See how much stronger his letter would have been had he started with the fifth paragraph, following it with the fourth paragraph.

The great weakness in many letters is padding out the introduction with non-essential material. It takes the writer too long to get down to his proposition. Here is a letter from a concern seeking to interest agents:

"We are in receipt of your valued inquiry and we enclose herewith full information in regard to the E. Z. Washing Compound and our terms to agents.

"We shall be pleased to mail you a washing sample postpaid on receipt of four cents in two-cent stamps or a full size can for ten cents, which amount you may subtract from your first order, thus getting the sample free. We would like to send you a sample without requiring any deposit but we have been so widely imposed upon by 'sample grafters' in the past that we can no longer afford to do this."

The first paragraph is hackneyed and written from the standpoint of the writer rather than that of the reader. The second paragraph is a joke. Seven lines, lines that ought to be charged with magnetic, interest-getting statements, are devoted to explaining why ten cents' worth of samples are not sent free, but that this "investment" will be deducted from the first order. What is the use of saving a ten-cent sample if you lose the interest of a possible agent, whose smallest sales would amount to several times this sum?

It is useless to spend time and thought in presenting your proposition and working in a clincher unless you get attention and stimulate the reader's interest in the beginning. Practically everyone will read your opening paragraph—whether he reads further will depend upon those first sentences.

Do not deceive yourself by thinking that because your proposition is interesting to you, it will naturally be interesting to others. Do not put all your thought on argument and inducements—the man to whom you are writing may never read that far.

Lead up to your proposition from the reader's point of view; couple up your goods with his needs; show him where he will benefit and he will read your letter through to the postscript. Get his attention and arouse his interest—then you are ready to present your proposition.

How To *Present* Your PROPOSITION

AFTER ATTENTION *has been secured, you must lead quickly to your description and explanation; visualize your product and introduce your proof, following this up with arguments. The art of the letter writer is found in his ability to lead the reader along, paragraph by paragraph, without a break in the* POINT *of* CONTACT *that has been established. Then the proposition must be presented so clearly that there is no possibility of its being misunderstood, and the product or the service must be coupled up with the* READER'S NEEDS. *How this can be done is described in this chapter*

AFTER you have attracted attention and stimulated the interest of the reader, you have made a good beginning, but only a beginning; you then have the hard task of holding that interest, explaining your proposition, pointing out the superiority of the goods or the service that you are trying to sell and making an inducement that will bring in the orders. Your case is in court, the jury has been drawn, the judge is attentive and the opposing counsel is alert—it is up to you to prove your case.

Good business letter, consciously or unconsciously usually contains four elements: description, explanation, argument and persuasion. These factors may pass under different names, but they are present and most correspondents will include two other elements—inducement and clincher.

In this chapter we will consider description, explanation and argument as the vehicles one may use in carrying his message to the reader.

An essential part of all sales letters is a clear description of the article or goods—give the prospect a graphic idea of how the thing you are trying to sell him looks, and this description should follow closely after the interest-getting introduction. To describe an article graphically one has got to know it thoroughly: the material of which it is made; the processes of manufacture; how it is sold and shipped—every detail about it.

There are two extremes to which correspondents frequently go. One makes the description too technical, using language and terms that are only partially understood by the reader. He does not appreciate that the man to whom he is writing may not understand the technical or colloquial language that is so familiar to everyone in the house.

For instance, if a man wants to install an electric fan in his office, it would be the height of folly to write him a letter filled with technical descriptions about the quality of the fan, the magnetic density of the iron that is used, the quality of the insulation, the kilowatts consumed—"talking points" that would be lost on the average business man. The letter that would sell him would give specific, but not technical information, about how the speed of the fan is easily regulated, that it needs to be oiled but once a year, and costs so much a month to operate. These are the things in which the prospective customer is interested.

Then there is the correspondent whose descriptions are too vague; too general—little more than bald assertions. A letter from a vacuum cleaner manufacturing company trying to interest agents is filled with such statements as: "This is the best hand power machine ever manufactured," "It is the greatest seller ever produced," "It sells instantly upon demonstration." No one believes such exaggerations as these. Near the end of the letter—where the writer should be putting in his clincher, there is a little specific information stating that the device weighs only five pounds, is made of good material and can be operated by a child. If this paragraph had followed quickly after the introduction and had gone into further details, the prospect might have been interested, but it is probable that the

majority of those who received the letter never read as far as the bottom of the second page.

If a man is sufficiently interested in a product to write for catalogue and information, or if you have succeeded in getting his attention in the opening paragraph of a sales letter, he is certain to read a description that is specific and definite.

The average man thinks of a work bench as a work bench and would be at a loss to describe one, but he has a different conception after reading these paragraphs from a manufacturer's letter:

"Just a word so you will understand the superiority of our goods.

"Our benches are built principally of maple, the very best Michigan hard maple, and we carry this timber in our yards in upwards of a million feet at a time. It is piled up and allowed to air dry for at least two years before being used; then the stock is kiln dried to make sure that the lumber is absolutely without moisture or sap, and we know there can be no warping or opening of glue joints in the finished product.

"Our machinery is electrically driven, securing an even drive to the belt, thus getting the best work from all equipment--absolutely true cuts that give perfect joints to all work.

"Then, as to glue: Some manufacturers contend that any glue that sticks will do. We insist there should be no question about glue joints; no 'perhaps' in our argument. That's why we use only the best by test; not merely sticking two pieces of wood together to try the joint quality, but glue that is scientifically tested for tenacity, viscosity, absorption, and for acid or coloring matter--in short, every test that can be applied."

This description is neither too technical nor too general; it carries conviction, it is specific enough to appeal to a master carpenter, and it is clear enough to be understood by the layman who never handled a saw or planer.

It may be laid down as a principle that long description should ordinarily be made in circulars, folders or catalogues that are enclosed with the letter or sent in a separate envelope, but sometimes it is desirable to emphasize certain points in the letter. Happy is the man who can eject enough originality into this description to make it easy reading. The majority

of correspondents, in describing the parts of an automobile, would say:

"The celebrated Imperial Wheel Bearings are used. These do not need to be oiled oftener than once in six months."

A correspondent who knew how to throw light into dark places said:

"Imperial Wheel Bearings: grease twice a year and forget."

This "and forget" is such a clever stroke that you are carried on through the rest of the letter, and you are not bored with the figures and detailed description.

In a similar way a sales manager, in writing the advertising matter for a motor cycle, leads up to his description of the motor and its capacity by the brief statement: "No limit to speed but the law." This is a friction clutch on the imagination that carries the reader's interest to the end.

One writer avoids bringing technical descriptions into his letters, at the same time carrying conviction as to the quality of his goods:

"This metal has been subjected to severe accelerated corrosion tests held in accordance with rigid specifications laid down by the American Society for Testing Material, and has proven to corrode much less than either charcoal iron, wrought iron, or steel sheet.

"A complete record of these tests and results will be found on the enclosed sheet."

Then there are times when description may be almost entirely eliminated from the letter. For instance, if you are trying to sell a man a house and lot and he has been out to look at the place and has gone over it thoroughly, there is little more that you can say in the way of description. Your letter must deal entirely with arguments as to why he should buy now

—persuasion, inducement. Or, if you are trying to sell him the typewriter that he has been trying out in his office for a month, description is unnecessary—the load your letter must carry is lightened. And there are letters in which explanation is unnecessary. If you are trying to get a man to order a suit of clothes by mail, you will not explain the use of clothes but you will bear down heavily on the description of the material that you put into these particular garments and point out why it is to his advantage to order direct of the manufacturers.

But if you are presenting a new proposition, it is necessary to explain its nature, its workings, its principles and appliances. If you are trying to sell a fountain pen you will not waste valuable space in explaining to the reader what a fountain pen is good for and why he should have one, but rather you will give the reasons for buying your particular pen in preference to others. You will explain the self-filling feature and the new patent which prevents its leaking or clogging.

It is not always possible to separate description and explanation. Here is an illustration taken from a letter sent out by a mail-order shoe company:

"I hope your delay in ordering is not the result of any lack of clear information about Wearwells. Let me briefly mention some of the features of Wearwell shoes that I believe warrant you in favoring us with your order:

(A) Genuine custom style;
(B) Highest grade material and workmanship;
(C) The best fit--thanks to our quarter-sized system --that it is possible to obtain in shoes;
(D) Thorough foot comfort and long wear;
(E) Our perfect mail-order service; and
(F) The guaranteed PROOF OF QUALITY given in the specification tag sent with every pair."

This is a concise summary of a longer description that had been given in a previous letter and it explains why the shoes will give satisfaction.

Here is the paragraph by which the manufacturer of a time-recording device, writing about the advantages of his system puts in explanation plus argument:

"Every employee keeps his own time and cannot question his own record. All mechanism is hidden and locked. Nothing can be tampered with. The clock cannot be stopped. The record cannot be beaten.

"This device fits into any cost system and gives an accurate record of what time every man puts on every job. It serves the double purpose of furnishing you a correct time-on-job cost and prevents loafing. It stops costly leaks and enables you to figure profit to the last penny."

Explanation may run in one of many channels. It may point out how the careful selection of raw material makes your product the best, or how the unusual facilities of your factory or the skill of your workmen, or the system of testing the parts assures the greatest value. You might explain why the particular improvements and the patents on your machines make it better or give it greater capacity. The description and the explanation must of necessity depend upon the character of the proposition, but it may be laid down as a general principle that the prospect must be made to understand thoroughly just what the article is for, how it is made, how it looks, how it is used, and what its points of superiority are. Whenever possible, the description and explanation in the letter should be reinforced by samples or illustrations that will give a more graphic idea of the product.

The prospect may be sufficiently familiar with the thing you are selling to relieve you of the necessity of describing and explaining, although usually these supports are necessary for a selling campaign. But it must be remembered that description and explanation alone do not make a strong appeal to the will. They may arouse interest and excite desire but they do not carry conviction as argument does. Some letters are full of explanation and description but lack argument. The repair man from the factory may give a good explanation of how a machine works, but the chances are he would fall down in trying to sell the machine, unless he understood how to reinforce his explanations with a salesman's ability to use argument and persuasion.

And so you must look well to your arguments, and the arguments that actually pull the most orders consist of proofs—cold, hard logic and facts that cannot be questioned. As you hope for the verdict of the jury you must prove your case. It

is amazing how many correspondents fail to appreciate the necessity for arguments. Pages will be filled with assertions, superlative adjectives, boastful claims of superiority, but not one sentence that offers proof of any statement, not one logical reason why the reader should be interested.

"We know you will make a mint of money if you put in our goods." "This is the largest and most complete line in the country." "Our factory has doubled its capacity during the last three years." "Our terms are the most liberal that have ever been offered." "You are missing the opportunity of your lifetime if you do not accept this proposition." "We hope to receive your order by return mail, for you will never have such a wonderful opportunity again." Such sentences fill the pages of thousands of letters that are mailed every day.

"Our system of inspection with special micrometer gauges insures all parts being perfect--within one-thousandth of an inch of absolute accuracy. This means, too, any time you want an extra part of your engine for replacement that you can get it and that it will fit. If we charged you twice as much for the White engine, we could not give you better material or workmanship."

Now this is an argument that is worth while: that the parts of the engine are so accurately ground that repairs can be made quickly, and new parts will fit without a moment's trouble. The last sentence of the paragraph is of course nothing but assertion, but it is stated in a way that carries conviction. Many correspondents would have bluntly declared that this was the best engine ever manufactured, or something of that kind, and made no impression at all on the minds of the readers. But the statement that the company could not make a better engine, even if it charged twice as much, sinks in.

Proof of quality is always one of the strongest arguments that can be used. A man wants to feel sure that he is given good value for his money, it matters not whether he is buying a lead pencil or an automobile. And next to argument of quality is the argument of price. Here are some striking paragraphs taken from the letter sent out by a firm manufacturing gummed labels and advertising stickers:

"We would rather talk quality than price because no other concern prints better stickers than ours--but we can't help talking price because no other concern charges as little for them as we do."

This is a strong statement but it is nothing more than a statement. The writer, however, hastens to come forward with argument and proof:

"You know we make a specialty of gummed labels--do nothing else. We have special machinery designed by ourselves--machinery that may be used by no other concern. This enables us to produce better stickers at a minimum expense.

"All of our stickers are printed on the best stock, and double gummed, and, by the way, compare the gumming of our stickers with those put up by other concerns. We have built up a business and reputation on stickers that stick and stay."

If you were in the market for labels you would not hesitate to send an order to that firm, for the writer gives you satisfying reasons for the quality and the low price of his goods. The argument in favor of its goods is presented clearly, concisely, convincingly.

The argument that will strike home to the merchant is one that points out his opportunity for gain. Here is the way a wholesale grocer presented his proposition on a new brand of coffee:

"You put in this brand of coffee and we stand back of you and push sales. Our guarantee of quality goes with every pound we put out. Ask the opinion of all your customers. If there is the least dissatisfaction, refund them the price of their coffee and deduct it from our next bill. So confident are we of the satisfaction that this coffee will give that we agree to take back at the end of six months all the remaining stock you have on hand--that is, if you do not care to handle the brand longer.

"You have probably never sold guaranteed coffee before. You take no chances. The profit is as large as on other brands, and your customers will be impressed with the guarantee placed on every pound."

The guarantee and the offer of the free trial are possibly the two strongest arguments that can be used either with a dealer or in straight mail-order selling.

Among the arguments that are most effective are testimonials and references to satisfied users. If the writer can refer to some well-known firm or individual as a satisfied customer he strengthens his point.

"When we showed this fixture to John Wanamaker's man, it took just about three minutes to close the deal for six of them. Since then they have ordered seventy-four more."

Such references as this naturally inspire confidence in a proposition and extracts from letters may be used with great effect, provided the name and address of the writer is given, so that it will have every appearance of being genuine.

A solicitor of patents at Washington works into his letters to prospective clients quotations from manufacturers:

"'We wish to be put in communication with the inventor of some useful novelty, instrument or device, who is looking for a way to market his invention. We want to increase our business along new lines and manufacture under contract, paying royalties to the patentee.

"'If your clients have any articles of merit that they want to market, kindly communicate with us. Our business is the manufacture of patented articles under contract and we can undoubtedly serve many of your clients in a profitable manner.'"

Such extracts as these are intended to impress upon the inventor the desirability of placing his business with someone who has such a wide acquaintance and is in a position to put him in touch with manufacturers.

To send a list of references may also prove a most convincing argument, especially if the writer can refer to some man or firm located near the one to whom he is writing. A mutual acquaintance forms a sort of connecting link that is a pulling force even though the reference is never looked up. In fact, it is only on occasions that references of this kind are investigated,

for the mere naming of banks and prominent business men is sufficient to inspire confidence that the proposition is "on the square."

After you have explained your proposition, described your goods and pointed out to the prospect how it is to his advantage to possess these goods, the time has come to make him an offer.

One of the pathetic sins of business letter writers is to work in the price too early in the letter—before the prospect is interested in the proposition. The clever salesman always endeavors to work up one's interest to the highest possible pitch before price is mentioned at all. Many solicitors consider it so essential to keep the price in the background until near the end of the canvass that they artfully dodge the question, "What is the cost?", until they think the prospect is sufficiently interested not to "shy" when the figure is mentioned.

A letter from a company seeking to interest agents starts out awkwardly with a long paragraph:

"We will be pleased to have you act as our salesman. We need a representative in your city. We know you will make a success."

Then follows a second paragraph giving the selling price of a "complete outfit" although there has not been a line in the letter to warm up the reader, to interest him in the proposition, to point out how he can make money and show him where he will benefit by handling this particular line.

After this poor beginning the letter goes on with its explanation and argument, but the message is lost—a message that might have borne fruit had the writer repressed his own selfish motives and pointed out how the reader would gain. There is then plenty of time to refer to the cost of the outfit.

A letter from a manufacturing concern selling direct to the consumer starts out in this kill-interest fashion:

"Did you get our circular describing the merits of our celebrated Wonderdown Mattresses which cost, full size, $10 each?"

An experienced correspondent would never commit such a blunder for he would not bring in the price until near the end of the letter; or, more likely, the dollar mark would not appear in the letter at all. It would be shown only in an enclosure—folder, circular, catalogue or price list. So important is this point that many schemes have been devised for keeping the cost in the back-ground and this is one of the principal reasons why many concerns are emphasizing more and more the free trial and selling on instalments.

One manufacturing company makes a talking point out of the fact that the only condition on which it will sell a machine is to put it in a plant for a sixty-day trial; then if it is found satisfactory the purchaser has his option of different methods of payments: a discount for all cash or monthly instalments.

There are many propositions successfully handled by gradually working up interest to the point where price can be brought in, then leading quickly to the inducement and the clincher. In such a letter the price could not be ignored very well and the effect is lost unless it is brought in at the proper place, directly following the argument.

Like all rules, there are exceptions to this. Sometimes where the reader is familiar with the proposition it may be a good policy to catch his attention by a special price offer at the very beginning of the letter. This is frequently done in follow-up letters where it is reasonably certain that the preceding correspondence has practically exhausted explanation, description and arguments. The problem here is different and a special price may be the strongest talking point.

Then, of course, there are letters that are intended merely to arouse the interest of the reader and induce him to write for prices and further information. The purpose here is to stimulate the interest and induce the recipient to send in particulars regarding his needs and ask for terms. After a man's interest has been this far stimulated it is comparatively easy to quote prices without frightening him away.

But in the majority of sales letters an offer must be made, for price, after all, is the one thing that is, to the reader, of first importance. Most men want to know all about a proposition without the bother of further correspondence and so a specific offer should usually follow the arguments.

How To Bring The *Letter* To A Close

GETTING ATTENTION, *explaining a proposition and presenting arguments and proofs are essentials in every letter, but they merely lead up to the vital part—*GETTING ACTION. *They must be closely followed by* PERSUASION, INDUCEMENT *and a* CLINCHER. *The well written letter works up to a climax and the order should be secured while interest is at its height. Many correspondents stumble when they come to the close. This chapter shows how to make a get-away—how to hook the order, or if the order is not secured—how to leave the way open to come back with a follow-up*

NOTHING will take the place of arguments and logical reasons in selling an article or a service. But most salesmen will bear out the statement that few orders would be taken unless persuasion and inducement are brought into play to get the prospect's name onto the dotted line. Persuasion alone sells few goods outside of the church fair but it helps out the arguments and proofs. The collector's troubles come mainly from sales that are made by persuasion, for the majority of men who are convinced by sound arguments and logical reasons to purchase a machine or a line of goods carry out their part of the bargain if they can.

There are a good many correspondents who are clever enough in presenting their proposition, but display a most limited

knowledge of human nature in using persuasions that rubs the prospect the wrong way.

"Why will you let a few dollars stand between you and success? Why waste your time, wearing yourself out working for others? Why don't you throw off the conditions which bind you down to a small income? Why don't you shake off the shackles? Why don't you rise to the opportunity that is now presented to you?"

Such a letter is an insult to anyone who receives it, for it really tells him that he is a "mutt" and does not know it. Compare the preceding paragraph with this forceful appeal:

"Remember, the men now in positions you covet did not tumble into them by accident. At one time they had nothing more to guide them than an opportunity exactly like this one. Someone pointed out to them the possibilities and they took the chance and gradually attained their present success. Have you the courage to make the start, grasp an opportunity, work out your destiny in this same way?"

This is persuasion by pointing out what others have done. It is the persuasion of example; an appeal that is dignified and inspirational.

And here, as in all other parts of the letter, there is the tendency to make the appeal from the selfish standpoint—the profits that will accrue to the writer:

"We strongly advise that you get a piece of this land at once. It is bound to increase in value. You can't lose. Won't you cast your lot with us now? It is your last opportunity to get a piece of this valuable land at this extremely low price. Take our word for it and make your decision now before it is too late."

A manufacturer of folding machines got away from this attitude and cleverly combined persuasion and inducement in

an offer made to newspaper publishers during the month of October:

"You want to try this folder thoroughly before you buy it and no better test can be given than during the holiday season when heavy advertising necessitates large editions. Now, if you will put in one of these folders right away and use it every week, we will extend our usual sixty-day terms to January 15th. This will enable you to test it out thoroughly and, furthermore, you will not have to make the first payment until you have opportunity to make collections for the December advertising. This proposition must be accepted before Oct. 31st."

Such an inducement is timely and doubly effective on this account. The appeal reaches the newspaper man at the season of the year when he is busiest; just the time when he most needs a folder, and the manufacturer provides for the first payment at the time of year when the average publisher has the largest bank account.

Occasionally the most effective persuasion is a ginger talk, a regular "Come on, boys," letter that furnishes the dynamic force necessary to get some men started:

"There is no better time to start in this business than right now. People always spend money freely just before the holidays--get in the game and get your share of this loose coin. Remember, we ship the day the order comes in. Send us your order this afternoon and the goods will be at your door day after tomorrow. You can have several hundred dollars in the bank by this time next week. Why not? All you need to do is to make the decision now.

"Unless you are blind or pretty well crippled up, you needn't expect that people will come around and drop good money into your hat. But they will loosen up if you go out after them with a good proposition such as this--and provided you get to them before the other fellow The whole thing is to get started. Get in motion! Get busy! If you don't want to take time to write, telegraph at our expense. It doesn't make much difference how you start, the thing is to start. Are you with us?"

Now, there really is nothing in these two paragraphs except a little ginger, and a good deal of slang, but this may prove

the most effective stimulant to a man's energy, the kind of persuasion to get him in motion.

One thing to be constantly guarded against is exaggeration —"laying it on too thick." Concerns selling goods on the instalment basis through agents who are paid on commission, find their hardest problem is to collect money where the proposition was painted in too glowing colors. The representative, thinking only of his commission on the sale, puts the proposition too strong, makes the inducement so alluring that the goods do not measure up to the salesman's claims.

Then the correspondent should be careful not to put the inducement so strong that it will attract out of curiosity rather than out of actual intent. Many clever advertisements pull a large number of inquiries but few sales are made. It is a waste of time and money to use an inducement that does not stimulate an actual interest. Many a mailing list is choked with deadwood—names that represent curiosity seekers and the company loses on both hands, for it costs money to get those names on the list and it costs more money to get them off the list.

The correspondent should never attempt to persuade a man by assuming an injured attitude. Because a man answers an advertisement or writes for information, does not put him under the slightest obligation to purchase the goods and he cannot be shamed into parting with his money by such a paragraph as this:

"Do you think you have treated us fairly in not replying to our letters? We have written to you time and again just as courteously as we know how; we have asked you to let us know whether or not you are interested; we have tried to be perfectly fair and square with you; and yet you have not done us the common courtesy of replying. Do you think this is treating us just right? Don't you think you ought to write us, and if you are not intending to buy, to let us know the reason?"

If the recipient reads that far down into his letter, it will only serve to make him mad. No matter what inducement the company may make him later, it is not probable that it can overcome the prejudice that such an insulting paragraph will have created.

Some of the correspondence schools understand how to work in persuasion cleverly and effectively. Here is a paragraph that is dignified and persuasive:

"Remember also that this is the best time of the entire year to get good positions, as wholesalers and manufacturers all over the country will put on thousands of new men for the coming season. We are receiving inquiries right along from the best firms in the country who ask us to provide them with competent salesmen. We have supplied them with so many good men that they always look to us when additional help is required, and just now the demand is so great that we can gurantee you a position if you start the course this month."

Persuasion plays a small part in selling general commodities, such as machinery, equipment, supplies, and the articles of every-day business, but correspondence courses, insurance, banking, building and loan propositions and various investment schemes can be pushed and developed by an intelligent use of this appeal.

Merged with the persuasion or closely following it should be some inducement to move the reader to "buy now." Description, explanation, argument and even persuasion are not enough to get the order. A specific inducement is necessary. There are many things that we intend to buy sometime, articles in which we have become interested, but letters about them have been tucked away in a pigeon-hole until we have more time. It is likely that everyone of those letters would have been answered had they contained specific inducements that convinced us it would be a mistake to delay.

In some form or another, gain is the essence of all inducements, for gain is the dynamic force to all our business movements. The most familiar form of inducement is the special price, or special terms that are good if "accepted within ten days." The inducement of free trial and free samples are becoming more widely used every day.

The most effective letters are those that work in the inducement so artfully that the reader feels he is missing something if he does not answer. The skillful correspondent does not tell him bluntly that he will miss the opportunity of a life time if he does not accept a proposition; he merely suggests it in a way

that makes a much more powerful impression. Here is the way a correspondence school uses inducements in letters to prospective students in its mechanical drawing course. After telling the prospect about the purchase of a number of drawing outfits it follows with this paragraph:

"It was necessary to place this large order in order to secure the sets at the lowest possible figure. Knowing that this number will exceed our weekly sales, we have decided to offer these extra sets to some of the ambitious young men who have been writing to us. If you will fill out the enclosed scholarship blank and mail at once we will send you one of these handsome sets FREE, express prepaid. But this offer must be accepted before the last of the month. At the rate the scholarship blanks are now coming in, it is more than likely that the available sets will be exhausted before November 1st. It is necessary therefore that you send us your application at once."

It is not necessary to offer something for nothing in your inducement. In fact, a good reason is usually a better order getter than a good premium. Make the man want your proposition—that is the secret of the good sales letter. If a man really wants your product he is going to get it sooner or later, and the selling letters that score the biggest results are those that create desire; following argument and reason with an inducement that persuades a man to part with his hard-earned money and buy your goods.

It is a never-ending surprise—the number of correspondents who cleverly attract the interest of a reader, present their proposition forcibly and convincingly, following with arguments and inducements that persuade him to buy, and then, just as he is ready to reach for his check book, turn heel and leave him with the assurance that they will be pleased to give him further information when they could have had his order by laying the contract before him and saying, "Sign here."

There are plenty of good starters who are poor finishers. They get attention but don't get the order. They are winded at the finish; they stumble at the climax where they should be strongest, and the interest which they worked so hard to stimulate oozes away. They fail because they do not know how to close.

As you hope for results, do not overlook the summary and the climax. Do not forget to insert a hook that will land the order.

Time, energy and money are alike wasted in creating desire if you fail to crystallize it in action. Steer your letter away from the hold-over file as dexterously as you steer it away from the waste basket. It is not enough to make your prospect want to order, you must make it easy for him to order by enclosing order blanks, return envelopes, instructions and other "literature" that will strengthen your arguments and whet his desire; and more than that, you must reach a real climax in your letters —tell the prospect what to do and how to do it.

The climax is not a part distinct from the parts that have gone before. Persuasion and inducement are but elements of the climax, working the prospect up to the point where you can insert a paragraph telling him to "sign and mail today." How foolish to work up the interest and then let the reader down with such a paragraph as this:

"Thanking you for your inquiry and hoping to be favored with your order, and assuring you it will be fully appreciated and receive our careful attention, we are."

Such a paragraph pulls few orders. Compare the foregoing with the one that fairly galvanizes the reader into immediate action:

"Send us a $2.00 bill now. If you are not convinced that this file is the best $2.00 investment ever made, we will refund your money for the mere asking. Send today, while you have it in mind.

Here is a paragraph not unlike the close of dozens of letters that you read every week:

"Trusting that we may hear from you in the near future and hoping we will have the pleasure of numbering you among our customers, we are,"

Such a close invites delay in answering. It is an order killer; it smothers interest, it delays action. But here is a close that is likely to bring the order if the desire has been crea'

"Simply wrap a $1.00 bill in this letter and send to us at our risk."

A writer who does not understand the psychology of suggestion writes this unfortunate closing paragraph:

"Will you not advise us at an early date whether or not you are interested in our proposition? As you have not replied to our previous letters, we begin to fear that you do not intend to avail yourself of this wonderful opportunity, and we would be very glad to have you write us if this is a fact."

How foolish to help along one's indifference by the suggestion that he is not interested. Just as long as you spend postage on a prospect treat him as a probable customer. Assume that he is interested; take it for granted that there is some reason why he has not replied and present new arguments, new persuasion, new inducements for ordering now.

A firm handling a line very similar to that of the firm which sent out the letter quoted above, always maintains the attitude that the prospect is going to order some time and its close fairly bristles with "do it now" hooks:

"Step right over to the telegraph office and send us your order by telegraph at our expense. With this business, every day's delay means loss of dollars to you. Stop the leak! Save the dollars! Order today!"

Another unfortunate ending is a groveling servility in which the writer comes on his knees, as it were, begging for the privilege of presenting his proposition again at some future time. Here are the two last paragraphs of a three-paragraph letter sent out by an engraving company—an old established, substantial concern that has no reason to apologize for soliciting business,

no reason for meeting other concerns on any basis except that of equality:

"Should you not be in the market at the present time for anything in our line of work, we would esteem it a great favor to us if you would file this letter and let us hear from you when needing anything in the way of engraving. If you will let us know when you are ready for something in this line we will deem it a privilege to send a representative to call on you.

"Trusting we have not made ourselves forward in this matter and hoping that we may hear from you, we are,"

It is a safe prediction that this letter was written by a new sales manager who will soon be looking for another job. Such an apologetic note, with such a lack of selling talk, such a street beggar attitude could never escape the waste basket. The salesman who starts out by saying, "You wouldn't be interested in this book, would you?" takes no orders. The letter that comes apologizing and excusing itself before it gets our attention, and, if it gets our attention, then lets down just as we are ready to sign an order, is headed straight for the car wheel plant.

Avoid in the closing paragraph, as far as possible, the participial phrases such as "Thanking you," "Hoping to be favored," "Assuring you of our desire," and so forth. Say instead, "We thank you," "It is a pleasure to assure you," or "May I not hear from you by return mail?" Such a paragraph is almost inevitably an anti-climax; it affords too much of a let-down to the proposition.

One of the essentials to the clinching of an order is the enclosures such as order blanks and return envelopes—subjects that are sufficiently important to call for separate chapters.

The essential thing to remember in working up to the climax is to make it a climax; to keep up the reader's interest, to insert a hook that will get the man's order before his desire has time to cool off. Your proposition is not a fireless cooker that will keep his interest warm for a long time after the heat of your letter has been removed—and it will be just that much harder to warm him up the second time. Insert the hook that will get the order NOW, for there will never be quite such a favorable time again.

"STYLE" In Letter Writing—And How To *Acquire It*

SPECIFIC STATEMENTS *and CONCRETE FACTS are the substance of a business letter. But whether that letter is read or not, or whether those statements and facts are* FORCEFUL *and* EFFECTIVE, *is dependent upon the manner in which they are presented to the reader—upon the "style." What "style" is, and how it may be acquired and put to practical use in business correspondence, is described in this chapter*

LETTER writing is a craft—selecting and arranging words in sentences to convey a thought clearly and concisely. While letters take the place of spoken language, they lack the animation and the personal magnetism of the speaker—a handicap that must be overcome by finding words and arranging them in sentences in such a way that they will attract attention quickly, explain a proposition fully, make a distinct impression upon the reader and move him to reply. Out of the millions of messages that daily choke the mails, only a small per cent rise above the dead level of colorless, anemic correspondence.

The great majority of business letters are not forcible; they are not productive. They have no style. The meat is served without a dressing. The letters bulge with solid facts, stale statements and indigestible arguments—the relishes are lacking. Either the writers do not realize that effectiveness comes only with an attractive style or they do not know how a crisp and invigorating style can be cultivated. Style has nothing to do

with the subject matter of a letter. Its only concern is in the language used—in the words and sentences which describe, explain and persuade, and there is no subject so commonplace, no proposition so prosaic that the letter cannot be made readable and interesting when a stylist takes up his pen.

In choosing words the average writer looks at them instead of into them, and just as there are messages between the lines of a letter, just so are there half-revealed, half-suggested thoughts between the letters of words—the suggestiveness to which Hawthorne referred as "the unaccountable spell that lurks in a syllable." There is character and personality in words, and Shakespeare left a message to twentieth-century correspondents when he advised them to "find the eager words—faint words—tired words—weak words—strong words—sick words—successful words." The ten-talent business writer is the man who knows these words, recognizes their possibilities and their limitations and chooses them with the skill of an artist in mixing the colors for his canvas.

To be clear, to be forceful, to be attractive—these are the essentials of style. To secure these elements, the writer must make use of carefully selected words and apt figures of speech. Neglect them and a letter is lost in the mass; its identity is lacking, it fails to grip attention or carry home the idea one wishes to convey.

An insipid style, is responsible for much of the ineffectiveness in business letters. Few men will take the time to decipher a proposition that is obscured by ambiguous words and involved phrases. Unless it is obviously to a man's advantage to read such a letter it is dropped into the waste basket, taking with it the message that might have found an interested prospect if it had been expressed clearly, logically, forcibly.

The first essential for style is clearness—make your meaning plain. Look to the individual words; use them in the simplest way—distinctive words to give exactness of meaning and familiar words to give strength. Words are the private soldiers under the command of the writer and for ease of management he wants small words—a long word is out of place, unwieldy, awkward. The "high-sounding" words that are dragged in by main force for the sake of effect weigh down the letter, make it logy. The reader may be impressed by the language but not by the thought. He reads the words and misses the message.

Avoid long, unfamiliar words. Clothe your thoughts in words that no one can mistake—the kind of language that men use in the office and on the street. Do not make the reader work to see your point; he is busy, he has other things to do—it is your proposition and it is to your interest to put in that extra work, those additional minutes that will make the letter easily understood. It is too much to expect the reader to exert himself to dig out *your* meaning and then enthuse himself over *your* proposition.

The men who write pulling letters weigh carefully every sentence, not only pruning away every unessential word but using words of Anglo-Saxon origin wherever possible rather than words of Latin derivation. "Indicate your selection" was written as the catch line for a letter in an important selling campaign, but the head correspondent with unerring decision re-wrote it—"Take your choice"—a simpler, stronger statement. The meaning goes straight to the reader's mind without an effort on his part. "We are unable to discern" started out the new correspondent in answering a complaint. "We cannot see" was the revision written in by the master correspondent—short, concise, to the point. "With your kind permission I should like to say in reply to your favor"—such expressions are found in letters every day—thousands of them. The reader is tired before the subject matter is reached.

The correspondent who is thinking about the one to whom he is writing starts out briefly and to the point by saying, "This is in reply to your letter," or, "Thank you for calling our attention to," ~~and so forth.~~ The reader is impressed that the writer means business. The attitude is not antagonistic; it commands attention.

Letters are unnaturally burdened with long words and stilted phrases, while in conversation one's thoughts seek expression through lines of least resistance—familiar words and short sentences. But in writing, these same thoughts go stumbling over long words and groping through involved phrases.

Proverbs are sentences that have lived because they express a thought briefly in short, familiar words. Slang becomes popular because of the wealth of meaning expressed in a few words, and many of these sayings gradually work their way into respectability—reluctantly admitted into the sanctuary of "literature" because of their strength, clearness, adaptability.

While short words are necessary for force and vigor, it may be very desirable at times to use longer and less familiar words to bring out the finer shade of meaning. A subtle distinction cannot be ignored simply because one word is shorter than another. "Donate" and "give" are frequently used as synonyms, but "give" should not be used because it is a short word when "donate" expresses the meaning more accurately As a usual thing, "home" is preferable to "residence," but there are times when the longer word should be used. "Declare" and "state," "thoroughfare" and "street"—there are thousands of illustrations on this point, and while the short, Anglo-Saxon word is always preferable, it should not be used when a longer word expresses more accurately the thought which the writer wishes to convey.

Many letter writers think that these rules are all right for college professors, journalists and authors, but impractical for the every-day business correspondent. Some of the most successful companies in the country, however, have recognized the importance of these very points and have adopted strict rules that give strength and character to the letters that are sent out. For example, here is a paragraph taken from the book of instructions issued by a large manufacturing concern in the middle west:

"Don't use a long or big word where a short one will do as well or better. For example: 'Begin' is better than 'commence'; 'home' or 'house' better than 'residence'; 'buy' better than 'purchase'; 'live' better than 'reside'; 'at once' better than 'immediately'; 'give' better than 'donate'; 'start' or 'begin' better than 'inaugurate.'"

The selection of words is not the only thing that the writer must consider. The placing of words to secure emphasis is no less important. The strength of a statement may depend upon the adroitness with which the words are used. "Not only to do one thing *well* but to do that one thing *best*—this has been our aim and our accomplishment." In this sentence, taken from a letter, emphasis is laid upon the word "best" by its position. The manufacturer has two strong arguments to use on the dealer; one is the quality of the goods—so they will give satisfaction to the customer—and the other is the appearance of the goods so they will attract the customer. This is the sentence used by a clever writer: "We *charge* you

for the service quality—we *give* you the appearance quality." The strength comes from the construction of the sentence throwing emphasis on "charge" and "give."

"Durability—that is our talking point. Other machines are cheaper if you consider only initial cost; no other machine is more economical when its durability, its length of service is considered." Here the unusual position of the word "durability," thrown at the beginning of the sentence, gives an emphasis that could not be obtained in any other way. And so the stylist considers not only the words he uses but he places them in the most strategic position in the sentence—the beginning.

In the building of a climax this order of words is reversed since the purpose is to work up from the weakest to the strongest word or phrase. The description, "sweet, pure and sanitary," gives emphasis to the sanitary feature because it comes last and lingers longest in the mind.

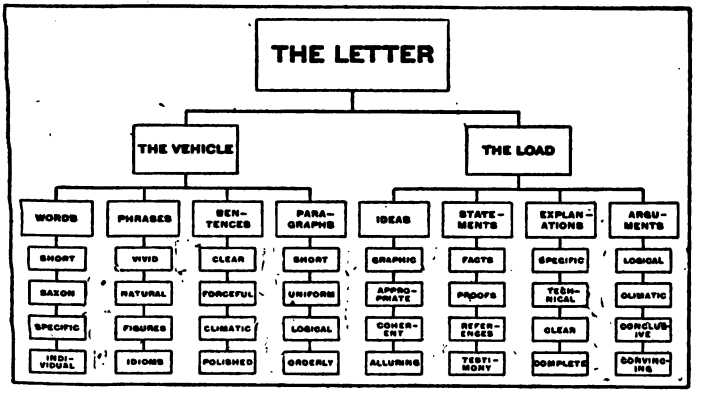
After the study of words, their meaning and position, the writer must look to completed sentences, and the man who succeeds in selling goods by mail recognizes first of all the force of concise statements. "You can pay more but you can't buy more." This statement strikes home with the force of a blow "We couldn't improve the powder so we improved the box.' There is nothing but assertion in this sentence, but it carries conviction. Not a word is out of place. Every word does duty. The idea is expressed concisely, forcibly. The simplicity of the sentence is more effective than pages of prosaic argument.

Here is a sentence taken from a letter of a correspondence school: "Assuming that you are in search of valuable information that may increase your earning capacity by a more complete knowledge of any subject in which you may be interested, we desire to state most emphatically that your wages increase with your intelligence." This is not only ungrammatical, it is uninteresting. Contrast it with the sentence taken from a letter from another correspondence school: "You earn more as you learn more." It is short, emphatic, thought producing. The idea is clearly etched into your mind.

Short sentences are plain and forceful, but when used exclusively, they become tiresome and monotonous. A short sentence is frequently most striking when preceding or following a long sentence—it gives variation of style. Following a long

sentence it comes as a quick, trip-hammer blow that is always effective. And there are times when the proposition cannot be brought out clearly by short sentences. Then the long sentence comes to the rescue for it permits of comparisons and climaxes that short sentences cannot give.

It is the long, rambling sentences that topple a letter over onto the waste basket toboggan. But the sentence with a climax, working up interest step by step, is indispensable. "By eye test, by mechanical test, by erasure test and by strength test, Orchard Hill Bond makes good its reputation as the best bond



There are two elements in every letter: the thought and the language in which that thought is expressed. The words, phrases, sentences and paragraphs are the vehicle which carries the load—explanations, arguments, appeal. Neither can be neglected if the letter is to pull

on the market for commercial use." There is nothing tiresome about such a sentence. There is no difficulty in following the writer's thought.

Here is another sentence showing the force to be attained through the use of a long sentence: "Just as the physician may read medicine, just as the lawyer may read law, just so may a man now read business—the science of the game which enables some men to succeed where hosts of others fail; it is no longer enveloped in mystery and in darkness." There is no danger of the reader's becoming confused in the meaning and he is

more deeply impressed because his interest has been gained by the gradual unfolding of the idea back of the sentence, the leading up to the important thought.

And after the choice of words, the placing of words and the construction of a sentence comes that other essential element of style—the use of figures of speech, the illustrating of one's thought by some apt allusion. Comparison adds force by giving the reader a mental picture of the unknown, by suggestions of similarity to familiar things. The language of the street, our conversational language, secures its color and expressiveness through figures of speech—the clever simile and the apt metaphor light up a sentence and lift it out of the commonplace.

"Don't hold yourself down," "Don't be bottled up," "Don't keep your nose on the grindstone"—these are the forceful figures used in the letters of a correspondence school. The most ignorant boy knows that the writer did not mean to be taken literally. Such figures are great factors in business letters because they make the meaning clear.

Here is the attention-getting first sentence of another letter: "Don't lull yourself to sleep with the talk that well enough should be let alone when practical salary-raising, profit-boosting help is within your reach." The sentence is made up of figures; you do not literally lull yourself to sleep with talk, you don't really boost profits, you don't actually reach out and grasp the help the letter offers. The figures merely suggest ideas, but they are vivid.

A sales manager writes to the boys on the road regarding a contest or a spurt for records: "Come on, boys. This is the last turn round the track. The track was heavy at the start but if none of you break on the home stretch you are bound to come under the wire with a good record." The salesman will read this sort of a letter and be inspired by its enthusiasm, when the letter would be given no more than a hurried glance if it said what it really means: "Get busy! Keep on the job! Send in more orders." By framing your ideas in artistic figures of speech you bring out their colors, their lines, their fullest meanings—and more than that, you know your letters will be read.

But in the attempt to add grace and attractiveness by some familiar allusion, one must not overlook the importance of facts—cold, plainly stated facts, which are often the shortest, most convincing argument. In the letter of an advertising

concern is this plain statement: "Last year our business was $2,435,893 ahead of the year before." No figure of speech, no touch of the stylist could make such a profound impression as this brief, concise statement of fact.

The average correspondent will agree that these are all essential elements of style—his problem is practical: how can he find the right words; how can he learn to put his proposition more clearly; how think up figures of speech that will light up the thought or illustrate the proportion.

To some men an original style and the ability to write convincingly is a birthright. Others have to depend less on inspiration and more on hard work. One man carries a note book in which he jots down, for future use, phrases, words and comparisons that he comes across while reading his morning paper on the way down town, while going through his correspondence, while listening to callers, while talking with friends at lunch, while attending some social affair—wherever he is, his eyes and ears are always alert to catch a good phrase, an unusual expression or a new figure of speech. At his first opportunity a notation is made in the ever-handy memorandum book.

Another man systematically reads articles by Elbert Hubbard, Alfred Henry Lewis, Samuel Blythe and other writers whose trenchant pens replenish his storage with similes, metaphors and crisp expressions.

The head of a mail-order sales department of a large publishing house keeps a scrapbook in which he pastes words, phrases, striking sentences and comparisons clipped from letters, advertisements, booklets, circulars, and other printed matter. Each month he scans the advertisements in a dozen magazines and with a blue pencil checks every expression that he thinks may some time be available or offer a suggestion. It is but a few minutes' work for a girl to clip and paste in these passages and his scrapbooks are an inexhaustible mine of ideas and suggestions.

Another man, after outlining his ideas, dictates a letter and then goes over it sentence by sentence and word by word. With a dictionary and book of synonyms he tries to strengthen each word; he rearranges the words, writes and rewrites the sentences, eliminating some, reinforcing others and devising new ones until he has developed his idea with the precision of an artist at work on a drawing.

The average correspondent, handling a large number of letters daily, has little time to develop ideas for each letter in this way, but by keeping before him a list of new words and phrases and figures of speech, they soon become a part of his stock in trade. Then there are other letters to write—big selling letters that are to be sent out by the thousands and letters that answer serious complaints, letters that call for diplomacy, tact, and above all, clearness and force.

On these important letters the correspondent can well afford to spend time and thought and labor. A day or several days may be devoted to one letter, but the thoughts that are turned over—the ideas that are considered, the sentences that are written and discarded, the figures that are tried out—are not wasted, but are available for future use; and by this process the writer's style is strengthened. He acquires clearness, force, simplicity and attractiveness—the elements that will insure the reading of his letters.

And one thing that every correspondent can do is to send to the scrap-heap all the shelf-worn words and hand-me-down expressions such as, "We beg to acknowledge," "We beg to state;" "Replying to your esteemed favor;" "the same;" "the aforesaid;" "We take great pleasure in acknowledging," and so on. They are old, wind-broken, incapable of carrying a big message. And the participial phrases should be eliminated, such as: "Hoping to hear from you;" "Trusting we will be favored;" "Awaiting your reply," and so on, at the close of the letter. Say instead, "I hope to hear from you;" or, "I trust we will receive your order;" or, "May we not hear from you?"

Interest the man quickly; put snap and sparkle in your letters. Give him clear and concise statements or use similes and metaphors in your sentences—figures of speech that will turn a spot-light on your thoughts. Pick out your words and put them into their places with the infinite care of a craftsman, but do not become artificial. Use every-day, hard-working words and familiar illustrations that have the strength to carry your message without stumbling before they reach their goal.

Making The Letter HANG TOGETHER

THE LETTER WRITER *looks to words, phrases and sentences to make the little impressions on the reader as he goes along. The letter as a whole also has to make a* SINGLE IMPRESSION—*clear-cut and unmistakable. The correspondent must use this combination shot-gun and rifle. To get this single rifle-shot effect a letter has to contain those elements of style that* HOLD IT TOGETHER; *there must be a definite idea behind the letter; the message must have a unity of thought; it must be logically presented; it must have a continuity that carries the reader along without a break, and a climax that works him up and closes at the height of his enthusiasm*

THINKING is not easy for anyone. And it is too much to expect the average business man to analyze a proposition in which he is not interested. His thoughts tend to move in the course of least resistance. If you want him to buy your goods or pay your bill or hire you, present your arguments in a way that will require no great mental exertion on his part to follow you.

A single idea behind the letter is the first requisite for giving it the hang-together quality and the punch that gets results. The idea cannot be conveyed to the reader unless it is presented logically. He won't get a single general impression from what you are saying to him unless there is unity of thought in the composition. He cannot follow the argument

unless it has continuity; sequence of thought. And, finally no logic or style will work him up to enthusiasm unless it ends with a strong climax.

These five principles—the idea behind, logic, unity of thought, continuity, climax—are the forces that hold the letter together and that give it momentum. Because these principles are laid down in text books does not mean that they are arbitrary rules or academic theories. They are based on the actual experiences of men ever since they began to talk and write. Essay or sermon; oration or treatise; advertisement or letter; all forms of communication most easily accomplish their purpose of bringing the other man around to your way of thinking, if these proved principles of writing are followed. Merely observing them will not necessarily make a letter pull, but violating them is certain to weaken it.

You cannot hit a target with a rifle unless you have one shot in the barrel. The idea behind the letter is the bullet in the gun. To hit your prospect you must have a message —a single, definite, clearly-put message. That is the idea behind the letter.

Look at the letter on page 61. It gets nowhere. Because the writer did not have this clear, definite idea of what he wanted to impress upon his prospect. Not one reader in ten would have the shallowest dent made in his attention by this letter, as he would have had if the writer had started out, for instance, with one idea of impressing upon the reader the facilities of his establishment and the large number of satisfied customers for whom it does work.

With this dominant idea in mind, a correspondent has got to explain it and argue it so logically that the reader is convinced. Here is a letter from a manufacturer of gasoline engines:

Dear Sir:

I understand you are in the market for a gasoline engine and as ours is the most reliable engine made we want to call your attention to it. It has every modern improvement and we sell it on easy terms.

The inventor of this machine is in personal charge of our factory and he is constantly making little improvements. He

will tell you just what kind of an engine you need and we will be glad to quote you prices if you will call on us or write us, telling us what you need.

Hoping to hear from you, we are,

Yours truly,

THE MADEWELL ENGINE CO.

The letter is illogical, disjointed and lacking in that dominant idea that carries conviction. Yet the writer had material at hand for a strong, logical selling letter. To have interested the prospect he should have told something specific about his engine. Here is the letter, rewritten with due regard to the demands of unity, sequence, logic and climax:

Dear Sir:

A friend told me yesterday that you want a gas engine for irrigating, so I am sending you bulletin "B."

Do you notice that all its parts are in plain view and easy to get at? Mr. Wilbur, who invented this engine, had a good many years of practical experience installing gasoline engines before he started to manufacture his own, and he knows what it means to tighten up a nut or some other part without having to send to the factory for a special man with a special wrench to do the work.

Sparkers sometimes get gummed up. To take the Wilbur sparker out you simply remove two nuts and out comes the sparker complete, and you cannot get it back the wrong way. It isn't much of a job to wipe the point off with a rag, is it?

And the governor! Just the same type of throttling governor that is used on the highest grade of steam engine, allowing you to speed her up or slow her down while the engine is running. That's mighty handy. Few engines are built like this. It costs a good deal of extra money but it does give a lot of extra satisfaction.

Nothing shoddy about the equipment described in the bulletin, is there? No. We don't make these supplies ourselves, but we do watch out and see that the other fellow gives us the best in the market because WE GUARANTEE IT.

This sounds very nice on paper, you think. Well, we have over four thousand customers in Kansas. Mr. W. O. Clifford, who lives not so far from you, has used a Wilbur for three years. Ask him what he has to say about it.

Then you will want to know just what such an engine will cost you, and you will be tickled to death when you know how much money we can really save you. I don't mean that we will furnish you with a cheap machine at a high price, but a really high-grade machine at a low price.

I await with much interest your reply telling us what you want.

Very truly yours,

L. W. Hamilton

The commonest cause of a lack of punch in a letter is the temptation to get away from the main idea—unity of thought. This is what a mail-order house writes:

"This is the largest catalogue of the kind ever issued, it will pay you to deal with our house. Every machine is put together by hand and tested, and we will ship the day your order is received.

"An examination of the catalogue will prove our claim that we carry the largest stock of goods in our line. Should our goods appeal to you, we shall be glad to add you to our list of customers."

There is neither unity nor logic in a letter like this, although there is the suggestion of several good ideas. The fact that the house issues the largest catalogue of its kind might be so explained to me that it would convince me that here is the place I ought to buy. Or, the fact that every machine is tested and put together by hand, if followed to a logical conclusion, would prove to me that I could rely on the quality of these goods. But when the writer doesn't stick to one subject for more than half a sentence, my attention will not cling to it and my mind is not convinced by a mere statement without proof.

Unity does not necessarily mean that the whole letter must be devoted to one point. A paragraph and even a sentence must have this quality of unity as much as the entire letter. And the paragraphs, each unified in itself, may bring out one point after another that will still allow the letter to retain its hang-together.

In the letter quoted, not even the individual sentence retained unity. This writer might have presented all his points and maintained the unity of his letter, had he brought out and simplified one point in each paragraph:

First: The size of the catalogue as an indication of the large stock carried by the house and the convenience afforded in buying.

Second: The quality of the machines; the care exercised in their assembling; the guarantee of the test, and the assurance that this gives the far-away purchaser.

Third: Promptness in filling orders; what this means to the buyer and how the house is organized to give service.

Fourth: The desire to enroll new customers; not based solely on the selfish desires of the house, but on the idea that the more customers they can get, the bigger the business will grow, which will result in better facilities for the house and better service for each customer.

And now, giving a unified paragraph to each of the ideas, not eliminating subordinate thoughts entirely, but keeping them subordinate and making them illuminate the central thought—would build up a unified, logical letter.

In the arrangement of these successive ideas and paragraphs, the third element in the form is illustrated—continuity of thought. Put a jog or a jar in the path of your letter and you take the chance of breaking the reader's attention. That is fatal. So write a letter that the reader will easily and, therefore, unconsciously and almost perforce, follow from the first word to the last—then your message reaches him.

How to secure this continuity depends on the subject and on the prospect. Appealing to the average man, association of thoughts furnishes the surest medium for continuity. If you lead a man from one point to another point that he has been accustomed to associating with the first point, then he will follow you without a break in his thought. From this follows the well-known principle that when you are presenting a new proposition, start your prospect's thoughts on a point that he knows, which is related to your proposition, for the transition is easiest from a known to a related unknown.

An insurance company's letter furnishes a good example of continuity of ideas and the gradual increasing strength in each paragraph:

"If you have had no sickness, and consequently, have never felt the humiliation of calling on strangers for sick benefits--even though it were only a temporary embarrassment--you are a fortunate man.

"Health is always an uncertain quantity--you have no assurance that next week or next month you will not be flat on your back--down and out as far as selling goods is concerned. And sickness not only means a loss of time but an extra expense in the way of hospital and doctor bills."

In the next paragraph the idea is further strengthened; a new thought is presented with additional force:

"If there is one man on earth who needs protection by insurance against sickness it is you. There are two thousand one hundred and fifty ailments covering just such diseases as you, as a traveling man, expose yourself to every day."

These are specific facts, therefore decidedly forceful. Then, while interest is at its height, another paragraph presents a specific offer:

"We will protect you at an extremely low annual cost. We guarantee that the rate will not exceed $9.00 a year--that's less than two and a half cents a day. Think of it--by paying an amount so small that you will never miss it, you will secure benefits on over two thousand sicknesses--any one of which you may contract tomorrow."

Here is the logical presentation of subject matter by paragraphs, leading up from an interest-getting general statement to a specific proposition. Break this continuity of ideas by a space filler or an inconsequential argument and the reader loses interest that it will be hard to regain.

Make this the test of each paragraph: if it does not illuminate the central thought, fit into the argument at that point, or add to the interest of the reader, eliminate it or bring it into conformity with the "idea behind the letter."

And there must be an actual continuity of thought from paragraph to paragraph. Merely inserting a catch-word or a conjunctive does not build a logical bridge.

The letter from another insurance agent might have been saved if this test had been applied, for it was well written except where the writer forgot himself long enough to insert an irrelevant paragraph about his personal interest:

"We are desirous of adding your name to our roll of membership because we believe that every man should be protected by insurance and because we believe this is the best policy offered. We are endeavoring to set a new record this month and are especially anxious to get your application right away."

The continuity of thought is broken. The preceding paragraphs have been working up the reader's interest in casualty insurance by pointing out the dangers to which he is exposed, the humiliating position in which it will place him and his family to be the recipients of charity in case of sickness or accident, and so on. Then the writer short-circuits the reader's interest by a paragraph of generalities which call attention to his desire for profits—things in which the prospect is not interested.

Most propositions can be developed in different ways, along different angles. The problem of the correspondent is to determine upon the way that will prove easiest for the reader to follow. He may have his path smoothed for him if he understands how facts, ideas and arguments will cohere in the reader's mind. It is much easier to follow a proposition if it is developed along some definite channel; if it follows the law of continuity, the law of similarity; of association or contrast, or of cause and effect.

Some epigrammatic thinker once said, "When you get through, stop!" This applies to letter writing as well as to speech. But don't stop a letter on the down grade. Stop after you have given your hardest punch This is what rhetoricians call the climax.

A letter constructed along these principles of style will almost inevitably have a climax. If there is an idea behind the letter, if it is carried out logically, if the letter sticks to this one idea, if the argument is carried along step by step, proceeding from the general statement to the specific, from the attention-getting first sentence to the inducement, then you are working up your reader's interest to the point where

with one final application of your entire idea to his own individual case, you have accomplished your climax, just as was done in the re-written letter about gasoline engines.

A letter from a firm manufacturing a duplicating machine starts out by calling attention to the difficulty the personal salesmen has in getting an audience with the busy executive. The second paragraph shows how his time and "your money" is wasted in call-backs and in bench warming while the solicitor waits for an opportunity to be heard. The third paragraph tells how over-anxious the salesman is to close a sale when a few minutes is granted—and usually fails, at least the first time. The fourth paragraph shows how this costly process of selling can be reduced by using the mails; then follow a couple of specific paragraphs telling about the advantage of the company's machine. A paragraph on the saving on five thousand circulars that would pay for the machine brings the proposition home to the reader and then, with interest at the height, the last paragraph—the climax—urges the reader to fill out a post card to secure the additional information regarding capacity, quality of work and cost. Logic, unity, sequence, climax—each does its part in carrying the load.

The principles of style and form in letter writing do not reach their highest pulling power as long as the correspondent handles them like strange tools. The principles must, of course, first be learned and consciously applied. But to give your letter the touch of sincerity and of spontaneity; to give it the grip that holds and the hook that pulls, these principles must become a part of yourself. They must appear in your letters, not because you have consciously put them in but because your thinking and your writing possesses them.

How To Make Letters ORIGINAL

THE AVERAGE *business letter is machine-made. It is full of time-worn phrases, hackneyed expressions and commonplace observations that fail to jolt the reader out of the rut of the conventional correspondence to which he is accustomed: consequently it does not make an impression upon him. But occasionally a letter comes along that "gets under the skin," that* STANDS OUT *from the rest because it has "human interest;" because it is original in its statements; because it departs from the prescribed hum-drum routine; because, in short, it reflects a live, breathing human being and not a mere set of rules*

STUDY the letters the janitor carries out in your waste-basket—they lack the red blood of originality. Except for one here and one there they are stereotyped, conventional, long, uninteresting, tiresome. They have no individuality; they are poor representatives of an alert, magnetic personality.

Yet there is no legerdemain about writing a good letter; it is neither a matter of luck nor of genius. Putting in the originality that will make it pull is not a secret art locked up in the mental storerooms of a few successful writers; it is purely a question of study and the application of definite principles.

A lawyer is successful only in proportion to the understanding he has of the law—the study he puts on his cases; a physician's success depends upon his careful consideration of every

symptom and his knowledge of the effect of every drug or treatment that he may prescribe. And it is no different with correspondents. They cannot write letters that will pulsate with a vital message unless they study their proposition in detail, visualize the individuals to whom they are writing, consider the language they use, the method of presenting their arguments, their inducements—there is no point from the salutation to the signature that is beneath consideration. You cannot write letters that pull without hard study any more than the doctor can cure his patients or the lawyer win his cases without brain work.

So many letters are insipid because the correspondents do not have time or do not appreciate the necessity for taking time to consider the viewpoint of their readers or for studying out new methods of presenting their proposition. Yet the same respect that would be given to a salesman may be secured for a letter. Any one of four attitudes will secure this attention. First of all, there may be a personal touch and an originality of thought or expression that commands immediate attention; in the second place, one can make use of the man-to-man appeal; then there is the always-forceful, never-to-be-forgotten "you" element; and finally, there are news items which are nearly always interest-getters.

By any one of these appeals, or better, by a combination of appeals, a letter can be given an individuality, a vitality, that will make it rise above the underbrush of ordinary business correspondence.

To begin with, vapid words and stereotyped expressions should be eliminated, for many a good message has become mired in stagnant language. So many correspondents, looking for the easiest road to travel, fall into the rut that has been worn wide and deep by the multitudes passing that way. The trouble is not the inability of writers to acquire a good style or express themselves forcibly; the trouble is mental inertia—too little analytical thought is given to the subject matter and too little serious effort is made to find an original approach.

Most business letters are cold, impersonal, indifferent: "Our fall catalogue which is sent to you under separate cover;" "We take pleasure in advising you that;" "We are confident that our goods will give you entire satisfaction," and so on—hackneyed expressions without end—no personality—no originality—no vitality.

The correspondent who has learned how to sell goods by mail uses none of these run-down-at-the-heel expressions. He interests the reader by direct, personal statements: "Here is the catalogue in which you are interested;" "Satisfaction? Absolute! We guarantee it. We urge you not to keep one of our suits unless it is absolutely perfect;" "How did you find that sample of tobacco?" No great mental exertion is required for such introductions, yet they have a personal touch, and while they might be used over and over again they strike the reader as being original, addressed to him personally.

Everyone is familiar with the conventional letter sent out by investment concerns: "In response to your inquiry, we take pleasure in sending you herewith a booklet descriptive of the White Cloud Investment Company." Cut and dried—there is nothing that jars us out of our indifference; nothing to tempt us to read the proposition that follows. Here is a letter that is certain to interest the reader because it approaches him with an original idea:

"You will receive a copy of the Pacific Coast Gold Book under separate cover. Don't look for a literary product because that's not its purpose. Its object is to give you the actual facts and specific figures in reference to the gold-mining industry."

A correspondence school that has got past the stage where it writes, "We beg to call attention to our catalogue which is mailed under separate cover," injects originality into its letter in this way:

"Take the booklet we have mailed you and examine the side notes on Drawing for Profit and Art Training that apply to you individually and then go back over them carefully."

The reader, even though he may have had nothing more than the most casual interest is certain to finish that letter.

Here is the way a paper manufacturer puts convincing argument into his letter, making it original and personal:

"Take the sheet of paper on which this letter is written and apply to it every test you have ever heard of for proving quality. You will find it contains not a single trace of wood pulp or fillers but is strong, tough, long-fiber linen. Take your pen and write a few words on it. You will find the point glides so smoothly that writing is a pleasure. Then erase a word or two and write them again--do it twice, three or four times--repeated erasures, and still you will find the ink does not blot or spread in the least. This proves the hard body and carefully prepared finish."

Even if a person felt sure that this same letter went to ten-thousand other men, there would be an individuality about it, a vividness that makes the strongest kind of appeal.

In a town in central Indiana two merchants suffered losses from fire. A few days later, one sent out this announcement to his customers:

"We beg to announce that temporary quarters have been secured at 411 Main Street, where we will be glad to see you and will endeavor to handle your orders promptly."

The second firm wrote to its customers:

Dear Mr. Brown:

Yes, it was a bad fire but it will not cripple the business. Our biggest asset is not the merchandise in the store but the good-will of our customers--something that fires cannot damage.

Our store does not look attractive. It won't until repairs are made and new decorations are in, but the bargains are certainly attractive--low prices to move the stock and make room for the new goods that have been ordered. Everything has gone on the bargain tables; some of the goods slightly damaged by water, but many of the suits have nothing the matter with them except a little odor of smoke that will disappear in a couple of days. Come in and look at these goods. See the original price mark--you can have them at just one-half the amount.

Very truly yours,

Smith and Dawson

Here is originality; emphasis is laid on "good will" in a way that will strengthen this "asset." The merchant put a personal element into the letter; gave it an original appeal that made it not only a clever bit of advertising, but proclaimed him a live-wire business man.

Here is the letter sent out by a store fixture manufacturer:

"If one of your salesmen should double his sales slips tomorrow you would watch to see how he did it. If he kept up this pace you would be willing to double his wages, wouldn't you? He would double his sales if he could display all his goods to every customer. That's the very thing which the Derwin Display Fixture does--it shows all the goods for your salesman, yet you don't have to pay him a higher salary."

A merchant cannot read this letter without stopping to think about it. The appeal strikes home. He may have read a hundred advertisements of the Derwin fixture, but this reaches him because of the originality of expression, the different twist that is given to the argument. There are no hackneyed expressions, no involved phrases, no unfamiliar words, no selfish motives.

And then comes the man-to-man attitude, the letter in which the writer wins the reader's confidence by talking about "you and me." A western firm handling building materials of all kinds entered the mail-order field. One cannot conceive a harder line of goods to sell by mail, but this firm has succeeded by putting this man-to-man attitude into its letters:

"If you could sit at my desk for an hour--if you might listen a few minutes to the little intimate things that men and women tell me--their hopes, their plans for the home that will protect their families--their little secret schemes to make saved-up money stretch out over the building cost; if you could hear and see these sides of our business you would understand why we give our customers more than mere quality merchandise. We plan for you and give expert advice along with the material."

There is nothing cold or distant in this letter; it does not savor of a soulless corporation. It is intimate, it is so personal that we feel we are acquainted with the writer. We would

not need an introduction—and what is more, we trust him, believe in him. Make the man feel that you and he are friends.

Write to the average college or university for a catalogue and it will be sent promptly with a stereotyped letter: "We are pleased to comply with your request," and so forth. But a little school in central Iowa makes the prospective student feel a personal interest in the school and in its officers by this letter:

My dear Sir:

The catalogue was mailed to you this morning. We have tried to make it complete and I believe it covers every important point. But I wish you could talk with me personally for half an hour--I wish you might go over our institution with me that I might point out to you the splendid equipment, the convenient arrangement, the attractive rooms, the ideal surroundings and the homelike places for room and board.

Won't you drop me a line and let me know what you think about our school? Tell me what courses you are interested in and let me know if I cannot be of some personal assistance to you in making your plans.

I hope to see you about the middle of September when our fall term opens.

Very cordially yours,

Wallace E. Lee

President.

This letter, signed by the president of the institution, is a heart-to-heart talk that induces many students to attend that school in preference to larger, better-equipped colleges.

A large suit house manufacturing women's garments uses this paragraph in a letter in response to a request for a catalogue:

"And now as you look through this book we wish we could be privileged to sit there with you as you turn its pages. We would like to read aloud to you every word printed on pages 4, 5 and 6. Will you turn to those pages, please? Sometimes we think the story told there of the making of a suit is the most interesting thing ever written about clothes--but then, we think Columbia suits are the most wonderful garments in the world."

The letter creates a feeling of intimacy, of confidence in the writer, that no formal arguments, logical reasons or special inducements could ever secure.

Important as these two attitudes are—the personal appeal and the man-to-man appeal—they can be strengthened manifold by making use of that other essential, the "you" element in letters. The mistake of so many writers is that they think of their interests in the transaction rather than the interests of

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Mr. Station Agent-
Brother Railroader:

As soon as you have told the fellow at the ticket window that the noon train is due at twelve o'clock and satisfied the young lady that her telegram will be sent at once and O. S.'d the way freight and explained to the Grand Mogul at the other end of the wire what delayed 'em, I'd like to chat with you just a minute.

It's about a book--to tell the truth, just between you and me, I don't suppose it's a bit better book than you could write yourself if you had time. I simply wrote it because I'm an old railroad man and telegrapher myself and had time to write it.

The title of the book is "At Finnegan's Cigar Store," and the hero of the fourteen little stories which the booklet contains is Mr Station Agent. The first story in the book, "How Finnegan Bought Himself a Diamond," is worth the price of that ten-cent cigar you're smoking, and that's all the book will cost you.

I know you'll like it--I liked it myself. I'm so sure of it I am enclosing a ten-cent coin card for you to use in ordering it. A dime in the card and postage stamp on the letter will bring you the book by first mail. "Nuff said."

"73"

E. N. RICHARDSON.

P. S.--I am enclosing another card for your night operator. if you have one--I'd hate to have him feel that I had slighted him.

This letter, sent out under a one-cent stamp to 80,000 agents, pulled 22,000 replies with the money. The writer did not address them individually, but he knew how to flag the interest of a station agent—by working in familiar allusions he at once found the point of contact and made the letter so personal that it pulled enormous results

the men to whom they are writing. It is "we" this and "we" that. Yet this "we" habit is a violation of the first rule of business correspondence. "We are very desirous of receiving an order from you." Of course; the reader knows that. Why call his attention to so evident a fact and give emphasis to the profit that you are going to make on the deal? To get his interest, show him where *he* will gain through this proposition —precious little he cares how anxious you are to make a sale.

No other appeal is so direct, so effective, as that which is summed up in the words "you," "your business" "your profits," "your welfare." "It costs you too much to sell crockery, but your selling expense can be cut down by utilizing your space to better advantage;" "Your easiest profits are those you make by saving expense;" "Did you ever figure up the time that is wasted in your mailing department by sealing and stamping one letter at a time?"—these are the letters that will be read through. Keep before the reader *his* interest. Show him how your proposition would benefit him.

This letter was sent to lady customers by a mail-order house:

Dear Madam:

You want a dress that does not sag--that does not grow draggy and dowdy? Then you want to make it of Linette--the new dress goods.

You have seen the beautiful new look and rich luster charm of a high-priced fabric. You can find this same quality in Linette at only thirty-nine cents a yard, and then--just think--it will stay in your dress through wearing, washing and wetting, and you will be surprised to see how easily dresses made of it may be washed and ironed and what long service the material will give.

Very truly yours,

Anderson & Anderson

In this letter there is not the faintest suggestion of the profits that the writer hopes to make by the sale. A man is going to listen just as long as you talk about him; a woman will keep on reading your letter as long as you talk about her. Shout "You" and whisper "*me*," and your letter will carry home, straight to the heart of the reader.

A capitalized "YOU" is often inserted in letters to give em-

phasis to this attitude. Here is a letter from a clothing concern:

Dear Madam:

Remember this--when we make your suit we make it for YOU just as much as if you were here in our work room and, furthermore, we guarantee that it will fit YOU just a perfectly as if you bought it of an individual tailor. We guarantee this perfection or we will refund your money at once without question, and pay the express charges both ways.

We have tried hard to make this style-book interesting and beautiful to you and full of advantage for YOU.

Your friends will ask "Who made your suit?" and we want you to be proud that it is YOUR suit and that WE made it.

Yours very truly,

Adams & Adams

And there is yet another quality that is frequently most valuable to the correspondent in making his letter personal. It is the element of news value. News interests him especially when it is information about his business, his customers, his territory, his goods, his propositions. Not only does the news interest appeal to the dealer because of its practical value to him, but it impresses him by your "up-to-the-minuteness" and it gives a dynamic force to your letters.

Tell a man a bit of news that affects his pocket book and you have his interest. Offer to save him money and he will listen to your every word, and clever correspondents in manufacturing and wholesale establishments are always on the alert to find some selling value in the news of the day.

One correspondent finds in the opening of lake navigation an excuse for writing a sales letter. If the season opens unusually early he points out to the retailer just how it may affect his business, and if the season opens late he gives this fact a news value that makes it of prime interest to the dealer. A shortage of some crop, a drought, a rainy season, a strike, a revolution or industrial disturbances in some distant country—these factors may have a far-reaching effect on certain commodities, and the shrewd sales manager makes it a point to tip off the

firm's customers, giving them some practical advance information that may mean many dollars to them and his letter makes the reader feel that the house has his interests at heart.

Another news feature may be found in some event that can be connected with the firm's product. Here is the way a manufacturer of stock food hitches his argument onto a bit of news:

"No doubt you have read in your farm paper about the Poland China that took first prize at the Iowa State Fair last week. You will be interested to know that this hog was raised and fattened on Johnson's stock food."

This is the way a manufacturer of window screens makes capital out of a new product:

"Throw away that old, rusty, stationary fly screen that you used last season. You won't need it any more because you can substitute an adjustable one in its place.

"How many times when you twisted and jerked at the old stationary screen did you wish for a really convenient one? The sort of screen you wanted is one which works on rollers from top to bottom so that it will open and close as easily and conveniently as the window itself.

"That's just the way the Ideal screen is made. It offers those advantages. It was placed on the market only a few months ago, yet it is so practical and convenient that already we have been compelled to double the capacity of our factory to handle the growing business.

"All the wood work is made to harmonize with the finish of your rooms. Send the measure of your window and the colors you want and get a screen absolutely free for a week's trial. If you are not perfectly satisfied at the end of that time that it's the most convenient screen you ever used, you need send no money but merely return the screen at our expense.

"The Ideal screen is new; it is improved; it is the screen of tomorrow. Are you looking for that kind?"

The news element may have its origin in some new feature, some attachment or patent that is of interest to the prospect. A manufacturer of furniture uses this approach effectively:

"The head of my designing department, Mr. Conrad, has just laid on my desk a wonderful design for something entirely new in a dining room table. This proposed table is so unique, so new, so different from anything ever seen before, I am having the printer strike off some rough proofs of this designer's drawing, one of which I am sending you under separate cover."

This letter is manifestly a "today" product. It wins attention because it is so up to date, and a new article may possess the interest-compelling feature that will lead to an order.

Then there are the letters that tell of the purchase of goods. A retailer puts news value into his letter when he writes that he has purchased the entire stock of the bankrupt Brown & Brown at thirty-eight cents on the dollar and that the goods are to be placed on sale the following Monday morning at prices that will make it a rare sales event. This is putting into the letter news value that interests the customer. It is original because it is something that could not have been written a week before and cannot be written by anyone else.

Then there are other elements of news of wide interest—the opening of a new branch office, the increase of facilities by the enlargement of a factory, the perfecting of goods by some new process of manufacture or the putting on the market of some new brand or line. These things may affect the dealer in a very material way and the news value is played up in the most convincing style. The correspondent can bear down heavily on the better service that is provided or the larger line of commodities that is offered. Search through the catalogue of possibilities, and there is no other talking point that it seized upon more joyfully by the correspondent, for a news item, an actual occurrence or some new development that enables him to write forceful, interest-impelling letters, for the item itself is sufficient to interest the dealer or the consumer. All that is required of the correspondent is to make the most of his opportunity, seize upon this news element and mount it in a setting of arguments and persuasion that will result in new business, more orders, greater prestige.

Making The *Form* Letter PERSONAL

OVER ONE-HALF *of all the form letters sent out are thrown into the waste basket unopened. A bare* ONE-THIRD *are partly read and discarded, while only* ONE-SIXTH *of them—approximately 15 per cent—are read through. This wasteful ratio is principally due to the carelessness or ignorance of the firms that send them out—ignorance of the little touches that make all the difference between a personal and a "form letter." Yet an increase of a mere one per cent in the number of form letters that are* READ *means a difference of hundreds—perhaps thousands of dollars to the sender. This article is based on the experiences of a house that sends out over a million form letters annually*

THERE are three ways by which you can deliver a message to one of your customers: you can see him personally, you can telegraph or telephone him, or you can write him a letter. After you have delivered the message you may decide you would like to deliver the same message to 252 other customers.

To see each customer personally, to telegraph or telephone each one, or to write each a personal letter, would prove slow and expensive. So you send the same letter to *all* your customers, since you wish to tell them all the same story.

But you do not laboriously write all these letters on the typewriter; instead, you print them on some kind of a duplicating machine.

But it is not enough to print the body of the letter and send it out, for you know from your own point of view that the average man does not give a proposition presented to him in a circular letter, the same attention he gives to it when presented by a personal appeal. And so little plans and schemes are devised to make the letter look like a personally dictated message, not for the purpose of deceiving the reader, but to make your proposition more intimate. This form of presentation is merely a means to an end; just because a letter is duplicated a thousand times does not make the proposition any the less applicable to the reader. It may touch his needs just as positively as if he were the sole recipient. The reason the letter that one knows to be simply a circular fails to grip his attention, is because it fails to get close to him—it does not *look* personal.

So, if form letters are to escape the waste basket—if they are to win the prospect's attention and convince him—they must have all the ear-marks of a personally dictated communication. If a proposition is worth sending out it is worthy of a good dress and careful handling.

All the principles of making the individual letter a personal message hold good with the form letter, except that greater pains must be taken to make each letter look personal. Nothing should be put into the letter to a dozen or a thousand men that does not apply to each one individually.

From the mechanical standpoint, there are five parts to a letter: superscription, body of the letter, signature, enclosures and envelope. In each of these five parts there are opportunities for original touches that make letters more than mere circulars.

The superscription and the way it is inserted in a form letter is the most important feature in making it personal. No semblance of a regularly dictated letter can be given unless the date, name and address are filled in, and if this is not done carefully it is far better to open your letter with "Dear Sir," and thus acknowledge that it is a circular.

To the left, and in exact alignment with the paragraphs in the body of the letter, should appear the name and address of the reader. If this superscription appears a fraction of an inch to either side of the margin the fill-in is evident. The style of type and the shade of the typewriter ribbons used in filling-in must match with absolute accuracy. This is vital

and yet the most common error in form letters is imperfect alignment and conspicuously different colors of ink.

To secure an exact match between the filled-in name and address and the body of the letter, it is necessary to use ink on the duplicating machine which matches your typewriter ribbon. The ink used on the duplicating machine can be mixed to correspond with the color of the ribbons. Long experience has shown that violet or purple shades of ink are best for form letters, for these colors are the easiest to duplicate. Black and blue are very difficult to handle because of the great variety of undertones which are put into these inks.

Duplicating machines which print through a ribbon give variable shades and the typist in filling in must watch carefully to see that her typewriter ribbons match the impressions made in the body of the letter, especially where the form letters are printed several months in advance and exposed to changing conditions.

In departments where the stenographers fill in only a few letters a day, a piece of a "fill-in" ribbon is attached to the end of the regular ribbon and used for this purpose.

For speed and better work, typists who do nothing but fill in form letters, overlay their work—that is, before one sheet is taken out of the machine another is started in. A scheme which is slower but gives accuracy, is to work backward on the name and address, writing the "Gentlemen" or "Dear Madam" first, beginning flush with the margin. The town or city is next written, beginning on the paragraph or established margin line and then the name and the date are filled in. Guides may be secured so that all sheets will be fed into the machine at one place, thus assuring an exact margin.

Too much emphasis cannot be laid on the necessity of doing this fill-in work carefully, or not at all. If letters are printed by means of some duplicating machine which prints through a ribbon, care must be taken that the first run from the fresh ribbon is filled in on the typewriter with an equally fresh typewriter ribbon. Later when the machine ribbon is worn, giving a lighter impression, an older ribbon is used on the typewriters.

This fill-in work is difficult, and even when done properly many firms adopt all kinds of little schemes to help out the personal appearance. Separating the superscription from the body of the letter so that the immediate contrast is not so great, accomplishes this purpose.

One familiar scheme is to print the shipping or sales terms of the company across the letterhead so that the first paragraph comes beneath the printed matter and the filled-in superscription above. Then if there is a slight difference in

Mr. L. B. Burtis,
1034 Elm Ave.
Ravenswood, Ill.,

Dear Sir:

In reply to your letter of July 3d I take pleasure in enclosing the free book asked for.

All that I ask is that you read the book--no longer letter is necessary.

Everything I could say to you in this letter about my chest is in my book. I wrote every word of it so when you read it, I wish you would take it as a personal message from me.

We deliver this chest to Ravenswood at the price quoted in the book.

This is all I am going to say. When you have selected the chest you wish, simply check it on the enclosed post card, and mail to me. Promptly upon its receipt the chest will go to you subject to your approval.

I shall be looking for your post card.

Very truly yours,

OLD ENGLISH CHEST COMPANY.

New York,
July 7, 1910.

Mr. L. B. Burtis,
1034 Elm Ave.,
Ravenswood, Ill.

Dear Sir:

I enclose with pleasure the free book you asked for in your letter of July 3rd.

All that I ask is that you read the book--no longer letter is necessary.

Everything I could say to you in this letter about my chest is in my book. I wrote every word of it so when you read it, I wish you would take it as a personal message from me.

The prices quoted you in this book include freight prepaid to Ravenswood

This is all I am going to say. When you have selected the chest you wish, simply check it on the enclosed post card, and mail to me. Promptly upon its receipt the chest will go to you subject to your approval

I shall be looking for your post card.

Very truly yours,

OLD ENGLISH CHEST COMPANY

Dict EB-ERS

Pres

The wrong and right way of handling form letters. In the first letter the type of the fill-in does not match and the lines are out of alignment. Wide white space at both sides of the date "July 3d," and the town, "Ravenswood," calls attention to the poor fill-in. The second letter shows the same fill-ins coming at the end of paragraphs. The second letter has a date line, personal signature and initials of dictator and stenographer —little touches that add to the personality of the letter

shades of ink it is not so apparent. The same care must, however, be taken with the alignment.

A similar scheme is to write the first paragraph or sentence in red ink. This is a somewhat expensive process, however, for the letter must be run through the duplicating machine twice and skill is required to secure an exact register.

Now that two-colored typewriter ribbons are in such general use the name and address and date are printed in red, eliminating the necessity of matching the ink of the body of the letter. This is an effective attention-getter, but unless carefully printed the impersonality is apparent.

In certain kinds of communications where the more formal customs of social correspondence are sometimes employed, the letter is often opened with the salutation, "My dear Sir." The full name and address is then written in the lower left corner, in alignment with the paragraphs of the body of the letter.

Some businesses, presenting a proposition to a limited number of persons, write the entire first paragraph. It is usually short and of course should be made pointedly personal. "Typing" the name and address onto the form letter is another familiar scheme to make it more personal.

Use of a body fill-in is always effective. But the right way to do this is to phrase the letter so that the name, or date, or word, to be inserted, comes at the beginning or end of the paragraph, preferably at the end. Otherwise the fill-in may be too short for the space allowed and the result is farcical.

Here is an all too common mistake:

"You may be sure. Mr. Hall, that this machine is just as represented."

The advantage of having the fill-in at the end of the paragraph is because names vary so much in length that they seldom just fill the space that is left and when there is a long blank space, as in the sentence given above, the scheme is anything but effective.

A manufacturer of automobiles, writing old customers who might wish to exchange their machines for newer models, added a real personal touch by filling in the serial number of each machine at the end of a line. Another individual touch was added in this way:

"You will be interested to know that we have recently sold one of our machines to a near neighbor of yours, Mr. Henry C. Smith of Rock Creek."

This sentence was so phrased that the neighbor's name came at the end of a line and could be easily filled in.

A furniture manufacturer works in a personal touch by closing a paragraph of his letter with this sentence:

"You can find our liberal offer to ship freight prepaid to Rogers Park on page 3 of the catalogue."

The name of the town and page number of the catalogue come at the end of the sentence. Another manufacturer opened his letter with this sentence: "On April 2, we received your inquiry." In this case, "On April 2," was filled in at the beginning of the sentence. Both schemes give the "one-man" attitude. A personal touch in the body of the letter indicates an individual communication—as it really is.

There are four ways for making the body of the letter look like a regularly typewritten message: it may be typewritten, printed on a printing press, printed through a ribbon or printed by means of a stenciled waxed paper.

Firms sending out only a few form letters typewrite them so that no effort is necessary to give an individual touch.

But the letter printed from typewriter type by means of an ordinary printing press is obviously nothing more than an ordinary circular. Filling in the name and address by a typewriter is absolutely useless. It is usually advisable to print form letters by means of some duplicating process which prints through a ribbon.

Where a stencil is used, the waxed paper is put in the typewriter and the letter is written on it without a ribbon. Here the stenciled letter replaces the usual type, and the impression secured can seldom be detected from a typewritten letter. A stencil can be made more quickly than type for the same letter can be set. Then the exact touch of the typist is reproduced on the duplicated letters through the stencil. No stenographer can write a letter without making some words heavier than others, the distribution of the ink is not the same throughout, so absolute uniformity in the printed letter is not advisable.

In printing the body of the letter select some process which gives the appearance of typewriting and then match the fill-in. One merchant secured an effective matching of fill-in and body by printing the form with a poorly-inked ribbon on the duplicating machine and then filling in the name and address with

a typewriter ribbon that had been well used. While the general appearance of the letter was marred by this scheme, the impression was that of a letter written on a poor typewriter and it was effective.

The business man, the clerk and the farmer—everyone visited by the postman—is becoming more and more familiar with letters. The day has passed when anyone is deceived by a carelessly handled form letter. Unless a firm feels justified in spending the time and money to fill in the letter very carefully, it is much better to send it out frankly as a circular.

Nor is this always a weakness, for a clever touch can be added that introduces the personal elements. One mail-order house sent out a large mailing with this typewritten notice in the upper left corner of the letterhead:

"You must pardon me for not filling in your name and address at the beginning of this letter, but the truth is I must get off fifty thousand letters tonight, and I have not the necessary stenographic force to fill in the name and address on each individual letter."

In spite of the fact that each man was frankly told that 49,999 other persons were receiving the same letter, the appeal was as personal as an individual message. Another writer opened his communication in this way:

"This letter is to YOU, and it is just as personal as if I had sat down and pounded it off on the typewriter myself, and I am sure that you, as a business man, appreciate that this is a personal message to you, even if I am writing a hundred thousand others at the same time."

This letter struck a popular and responsive chord, for each reader took it to himself as a frank, honest appeal, from a frank, honest business man. It was a direct personal communication because each reader felt that although it was duplicated a thousand times it nevertheless contained a live message.

But the care that some writers take to make the form letter look personal, is the very thing that kills it. They make the letter too perfect. To avoid this result, leave an imperfect

word, here and there, throughout the body of the letter. Watch the setting up of the type to be sure the lines are not spaced out like a printed page. Many correspondents imitate the common mistakes of the typewritten letter from the mechanical standpoint and in the language.

Time spent in correcting these errors with pen and ink is usually considered a paying investment. The tympan of the duplicating machine is sometimes made uneven so that the impression of a typewriter is still further carried out. Some duplicating machines advertise that their type print "loose" for this very purpose. A favorite scheme with firms where letter presses are used is to blur the letter slightly after it has been filled in and signed. A word "XXX'd" out as by a typewriter lends an impression of the personal message, as does also the wrong spelling of a word, corrected by pen and ink.

But fully as vital to the individuality of the letter is the manner in which it is closed. The signature of the form letter is a subject that deserves as careful consideration as the superscription and the body of the letter. The actual typewritten letter to Henry Brown is signed with pen and ink. Even where the name of the company also appears at the end of the letter, the personal signature in ink is desirable. And when you write all the Henry Browns on your mailing list, you should apply the pen-and-ink signature to every letter. That is the only effective way.

It is not so essential that the signature should be applied by the writer personally. Often a girl writes the signature, saving the time of a busy department head. Many firms use a rubber facsimile stamp for applying the signature, but it is not as effective, for it is seldom that the stamped name does not stand out as a mechanical signature. One concern adds the name of the company at the bottom of the letter and has a clerk mark initials underneath with pen and ink.

The form letter has a heavy load which carries a row of hieroglyphics at the bottom of the page—the "X-Y-Z," the "4, 8, 6," the "Dictated WML-OR" and the twenty and one other key numbers and symbols common to the form letters of many houses. When a man receives such a letter, he is impressed by the mass of tangled mechanical operations the message has undergone; on its face he has the story of its mechanical make-up and its virility is lost, absolutely.

Then consider the various notes, stamped in a frankly mechanical manner at the bottom of the letter, such as, "Dictated, but not read," "Signed in the absence of Mr. So-and-So." To the average man who finds one of these notes on the letter, there is the impression of a slap in the face. He does not like to be reminded that he may converse with the stenographer in the absence of the president. When a letter says "Not read" he feels that the message was not of sufficient importance to warrant the personal attention of the writer. Eliminate all such notes from the form letter.

Sometimes a postscript may suggest a note of personality. For instance, one firm writes underneath the signature: "I want you to look especially at the new model on page 37 of the catalogue." This is effective if done with pen and ink, but if printed or stamped, it gives no additional tone of individuality to the letter. One manufacturer had a postscript written on an extra slip of paper which he pasted to the corner of the sheet.

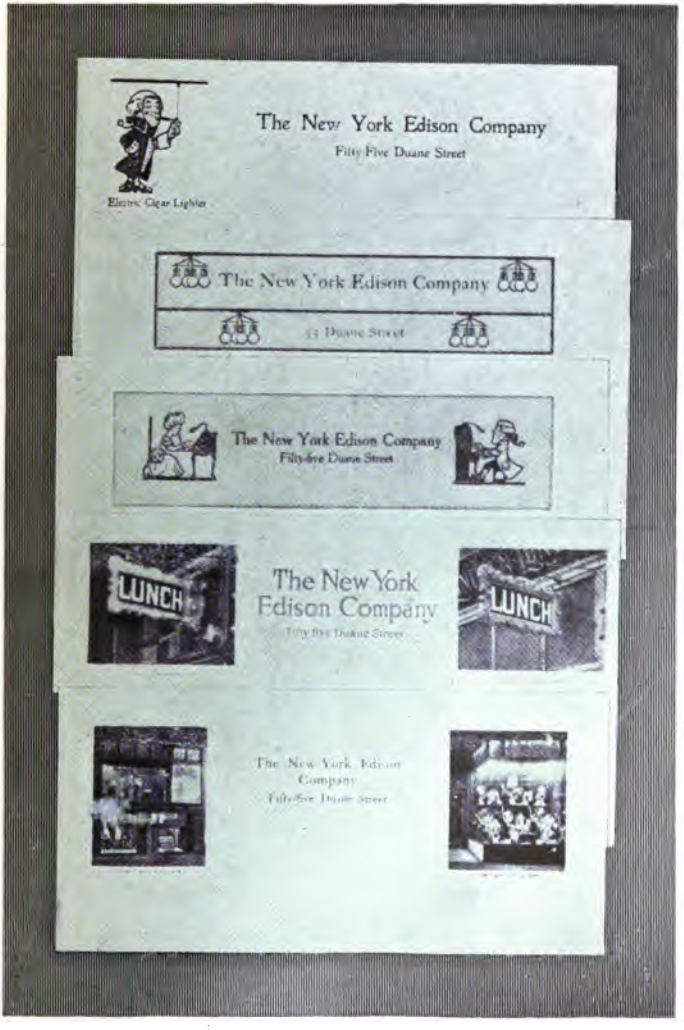
Another concern writes out on a piece of white paper the blue-penciled postscript: "I'll send you this three-tool garden kit *free* (express prepaid) if your order for the patent roller reaches me before the 5th." This is made into a zinc etching and printed in blue so perfectly that the postscript appears to have been applied with a blue pencil.

Still another postscript scheme is to write the form letter so that it just fills the first page, then to dictate and sign a paragraph for a second page—a most effective plan.

Then you must consider the enclosure that often goes with the letter. This frequently stamps it a circular. If you are offering a special discount or introductory sale price, for instance, it would be ridiculous to say in your letter, "This is a special price I am quoting to you," when the reader finds the same price printed on the circular. Print the regular price, and then blot out the figures with a rubber stamp and insert the special price with pen and ink, or with a stamp.

If you offer a special discount it is best to say so frankly:

"I am making this special discount to a selected list of a few of our old friends. And in order that you may be sure of this discount I am enclosing the discount card which will entitle you to the special prices."



A series of letterheads that illustrate various uses of the product and so not only vary the appearance of successive letters but afford good advertising

For different departments, to handle different classes of correspondence, or simply to vary their follow-up, varying letterheads are used

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The discount card should be filled-in with the name of the person written and stamped with a serial numbering machine. The date the special offer expires should also be stamped on the circular. In making a special offer to a "limited number of persons," the enclosure describing it and the return order blank should not be too elaborate or carefully prepared. It is more effective to make them inexpensive and give a careless appearance. Aim to carry the impression that with a hundred or so you could not afford to do it better.

Do not let an opportunity pass to give the enclosure the same personal touch that you aim at in the letter. Some houses even sign the reader's name to the card. A pencil or pen mark over some particular feature of the enclosure is another way to suggest personal attention.

Refer to the enclosure in a way that indicates individual attention. A correspondence school takes off the weight of the overload of enclosures by inserting this paragraph:

"So in order that you may properly understand our proposition I am enclosing these circulars and application blanks. It is impossible to tell one whole story in a single letter, or even a series of letters. To make them perfectly plain I have asked my stenographer to number them with a pen, and I will refer to them in this letter in that order."

A manufacturer who has succeeded in the mail-order business turns down a page in his catalogue, and refers to it in this way:

"I have turned down the corner of a page -- 39 -- in my catalogue that I particularly want you to read. On this page you will find pictured and described the best value in a single-seated carriage ever offered to the public. Turn to this page now and see if you can afford not to investigate this proposition further."

A successful campaign prepared by a wholesale house consisted simply of a letter and a cheap-looking yellow circular, across the top of which had been printed with a typewriter duplicating machine this heading:

"There is no time to prepare an elaborate circular--the time limit set on this offer is too short."

This idea was further strengthened by additional typewritten notes on the top and sides of the circular. The special offer and order blank appeared in typewriter type on the back of the circular.

Another scheme which pulled results for a tailor was this typewritten postscript:

"The enclosed is a circular letter. If I sent it to you without this personal note, I fear you would be too busy to give it the attention it deserves. So I ask you now--in justice to your interests--to read this circular as carefully as if I had put the whole thing in a personal letter to you."

It is an easy matter to enclose a few typewritten names, so a paper manufacturer says in his answer to an inquiry:

"I'm sending you a list of the printers in your immediate vicinity from whom you can secure our bond papers."

A land concern refers to an enclosed list in this way:

"So you can investigate for yourself just what our proposition will do for you, I am having my stenographer make up a list of a few purchasers in your vicinity from whom you can secure first hand facts."

Another concern typewrites the note "Personal Matter" on the enclosed return envelope to give added individuality to it. Thus the return envelope contributes to the general impression of the one-man message. But whether it is the superscription, the body of the letter, the closing or the enclosure, there is one general principle that must be followed: first consider how you would handle the individual letter, then make the form letter similar. Make the form letter talk as though it were intended for one man. Keep this rule in mind and your form letters will pull.

Making *Letterheads* and *Envelopes* DISTINCTIVE

THE DRESS *of a business letter reflects the character and the standing of a house no less than the dress of its personal representative. The quality of the paper, the kind of printing or engraving, the mechanical make-up—all these things contribute to the* IMPRESSION *a letter makes upon the recipient even* BEFORE THE MESSAGE IS READ. *Many letters come to nothing because their dress is unattractive, cheap, slovenly; and so progressive business men are learning to select their stationery with care to insure for it both tone and dignity. The kind of paper to select—the size, the tint and the quality—is described and explained in the following chapter*

THE first impression created by a business letter is based upon its outward appearance—upon its mechanical make-up, the quality of its paper, the grade of its printing or engraving; upon the superficial qualities that are apparent at a glance.

The externals do not necessarily reflect the quality of the message within the letter. But the experienced business man, who is trained to make his estimate quickly, gets an impression of some kind—good, bad or indifferent—of every letter that comes before him, even before a word of that letter is read.

In other words, the general appearance of the letter is the first appeal that it makes to the average man. The nearer

that appearance conforms to the appearance of the letters from reputable concerns with which he is familiar, the more favorably he is impressed with it. The farther its appearance departs from the established and approved standards, the more forcibly will that letter force itself upon his attention. But whether the recipient is favorably or unfavorably impressed by this prominence depends upon the skill and ingenuity with which the letter is made up mechanically.

Generally speaking, business correspondence paper may be classified as follows:

First: The *conventional* stationery, that conforms to the established rules and the principal variation of which is in the quality of its paper and printing.

Second: The *individualistic* stationery, that departs from the usual styles and is good to the extent that it meets the unusual requirements for which it is designed.

Third: The *eccentric* stationery, which is usually merely a fanciful violation of the conventions for the purpose of being conspicuous.

Of these three types of business stationery, the first is essentially practical and sane; the second is forceful if it does not violate the fundamental rules of color and design, and if it has a peculiarly apt application; while the third is almost invariably in as poor taste as eccentricity in dress.

The first consideration in the preparation of business stationery is the paper, or "stock."

The quality of this "stock," like the quality of material of a suit of clothes, largely determines the taste, if not the resources of the owner. Important messages may be written on cheap stationery; big men with big plans are sometimes clad in shoddy garments. But ninety-nine out of a hundred are not, and the hundredth man, who does not conform to the accepted order of things, is taking an unnecessary business risk of being wrongly classified. After a man has delivered his message, the quality of his clothes is not an important item. After a letter has been read, the quality of its paper is insignificant. But as the man is seen before he is heard, and the letter before it is read, it is good business to make both dress and stationery conform to approved styles.

For instance, the average financial institution, such as a bank or trust company, takes every precaution to create an

impression of strength and security. The heavy architecture of its building, the massive steel bars, its uniformed attendants the richness of its furnishings, all tend to insure a sense of reliability. Does it use cheap stationery? On the contrary, it uses rich, heavy bond. The quality of its paper conforms to the dignity and wealth of the institution; indeed, so long has the public been trained to expect good letter paper from such concerns that it would be apt to mistrust, perhaps unconsciously, the house that resorted to cheap grades of stationery which is almost invariably associated with cheap concerns or with mere form letters issued in large quantities.

Stationery should be representative of the business from which it comes. The impression created by a well-dressed man, as well as of a well-dressed letter, is seldom analyzed; the first glance is generally sufficient to establish that impression. A letter soliciting an investment of money, if printed on cheap stock, may create such a tawdry impression as to be discarded instantly by the average business man, although the letter may come from an entirely reliable house and contain an excellent business proposition on good, substantial paper. For this reason, the letter that departs from the usual standards must assume unnecessary risks of being thrown away unread.

To discriminate at a glance between important and inconsequential business letters, is what most men have been trained to do. It is not exaggeration to claim that the success of many business letters often depends upon the paper. The difference between the letter of an obscure country merchant or lawyer, and that of his well-known correspondent in the city, lies often in its mechanical appearance. The one, who is not trained to observe what he considers trifling items, uses paper that is cheap and easily available; the other, experienced in the details that tend to increase the dignity of the house, selects his stationery with care from a wider assortment. Ninety-nine times out of a hundred the two letters may be identified at a distance. The message of one letter may be just as important as the other; but one is properly and the other is improperly "clothed."

What the firm thinks about business stationery is not so important as what the recipients think. Do not buy good stock because it pleases the "house," but because it influences the man to whom the house writes. First impressions are

usually strongest and the first impression produced by a letter comes from the paper upon which it is written.

Some men seem to feel superior to creating a good impression. They do not want to stoop so low as to go to the best hotel. They will not buy a hat or an umbrella that can help them get business. Their general idea is to bang their way into the market and succeed in their shirt sleeves, as it were, and on the strength of the goods. Of course, if a man has time to succeed in his shirt sleeves, there is no objection to it. The idea of having as one's address the best hotel, or in writing one's business on the best paper, is not that a man could not succeed in his shirt sleeves, if he set out to, but that he has not time. He gets little things out of the way and proceeds to business.

The quality of the paper must be largely influenced by the purpose, as well as by the quantity of the letters to be written. A firm that sends out hundreds of thousands of form letters to sell a small retail article in the rural districts, will not use an expensive stock; it will use a cheaper quality of paper. If the form letter goes to business or professional men in the city, the quality of the paper will be determined accordingly. In every instance, stock should be selected which will meet the expectations of the recipient.

The fact that the recipient knows a form letter as such, largely nullifies its influence. A business man who sends out a large number of form letters a year claims that when he gets a reply beginning, "In response to your form letter," he knows that the effect of that letter is absolutely lost on a large percentage of this list who seldom or never bother to read such communications. And one of the distinguishing marks of such a letter is the poor quality of its paper.

Different grades of stationery may be used for the various departments. For inter-house or inter-department correspondence, an inexpensive paper is desirable. For many purposes, indeed, a low-priced stock is entirely permissible. But the higher the quality of paper, the more exclusive and personal that letter becomes, until, in the cases of executive heads of corporations, the stock used is of the best. One well-known corporation regularly uses six different grades of paper for its letters; one grade is engraved upon a thin bond of excellent quality and used by the president of the company when writing in his official capacity; another grade is engraved upon a good

quality of linen paper and is used by the other officers, sales managers and heads of office departments when writing official letters to outside parties; when writing to officers or employees of their own concern, the same letterhead, lithographed on a less expensive grade of paper, is used. A fourth grade of bond paper is used by officers and department heads for their semi-official correspondence. The sixth grade is used only for personal letters of a social nature; it is of a high quality of linen stock, tinted. Thus, the size, shape and quality of the paper and letterhead in each instance is made to conform to the best business and social usages.

For business correspondence, custom allows but little leeway in the choice of paper. For print shops, advertising concerns, ink manufacturers, engravers, or paper manufacturers, stationery offers an opportunity to exploit their taste or products in an effective and legitimate manner. For most houses, however, a plain bond, linen, or the vellums and hand-made papers that are coming into favor, furnish the best letter paper.

Colors on correspondence paper are seldom used to good effect; the results are frequently glaring and cheap. When in doubt as to what tint to use in the paper stock, use white, which is always in good taste. Tinted stock is occasionally used to good advantage as a "firm color." In such cases all the correspondence of that house has a uniform tint, which thus acquires an advertising value in attracting attention to itself among a mass of other letters. Aside from this occasional and often doubtful advertising value, tinted stock tends toward the eccentric except in the cases of paper dealers, publishers, or printers who have a purpose in displaying typographical effects.

Many concerns use paper of various tints, each of which identifies the particular department from which it comes. Thus, white paper may mark the letters from the executive department, blue from the selling department, and brown from the manufacturing department. But, even in such cases, the colors are used ordinarily only for inter-house or inter-department communications.

The sheet should be of standard size; that is the letter sheet should be folded to fit exactly into the envelope that is used.

Only such paper stock should be selected as can hold ink readily. Never select a stock that is not entirely serviceable

on a typewriting machine. Never sacrifice the practical to the eccentric in business stationery.

An inferior quality of stationery is sometimes accepted by the shrewd observer either as a deliberate act to economize or as an indication of poor taste or indifference. A man who gets an estimate, for example, written on cheap paper, may be led to believe that the man who skimps on letter paper is apt to skimp on his work. So long as the paper represents the sender, just so long will the sender be judged by it.

From a semi-business or social standpoint, stationery often plays an important role; many instances are recorded where a man's private note paper has been the means of eliminating his name from select, social lists. The lady who, in writing to an employment office for a butler, used her private stationery with the remark, "that is one more way of giving them to understand what sort of a butler I want," knew the effect produced by proper letter paper.

In other words, the *stationery* of a business house—the size, the proportions, the tint, the quality of its correspondence paper—offers the first of the several opportunities for the correspondent to put the recipient into a receptive state of mind toward the communication. It is an item that the shrewd correspondent does not ignore, because it offers him an opportunity—and the first opportunity—to score.

The *Typographical* Make-Up Of BUSINESS LETTERS

ALL BUSINESS *houses recognize the necessity for having printed letterheads and envelopes, but the variety of designs and styles are infinite. Nothing, not even the paper, affords such an index to the character of the individual or firm as the typography of the envelope and letterhead. An impression, favorable or otherwise, is created* BEFORE THE LETTER IS READ. *This chapter describes the methods of printing, engraving and lithographing; the advantages of each process, and the difference in prices; the proper placing of date, name and address, the width of margins, spacing between lines—little points that contribute to the appearance of the letter and give it tone*

THE feature of a business letter that invariably commands the first conscious attention of the recipient is the name —printed or written—of the firm or individual from whom the letter comes.

Except when the correspondent intentionally omits this information for the purpose of inducing the recipient to notice a circular letter that he might otherwise ignore, the name and address of the sender is printed on the envelope.

This is done for two reasons: it brings the name of the correspondent before the recipient immediately upon receipt of the letter; it tends to secure favorable attention, and it enables the post office authorities to return letters to the senders in

case of non-delivery because of removals, death, wrong address or other causes.

In either case, the interests of the correspondent are best served by printing this information in the upper left corner of the face of the envelope. It is this side of the envelope that bears the address and the stamp, and consequently the only side, under ordinary circumstances, that receives attention from either the postal officials or the recipient. When the sender's name is printed in this position, it is brought prominently to the attention of the recipient as the letter is placed before him. But even a more practical reason for putting this data in the upper left corner is that such a location on the envelope permits the post office rubber stamp, "*Return to Sender*," to be affixed, in case of need, without the confusion and annoyance that is caused when this address is printed on the back of the envelope, as is sometimes done.

As a rule, the printed matter that appears on the envelope should consist merely of the name and address of the sender in plain, legible letters.

In no case should the address be ambiguous. However many branch offices the firm may have, the use of more than one address on the envelope is apt to be confusing and may result in a communication's being returned to an office other than that from which it comes. To avoid this, only one address should be printed on the envelope, and that should be the address to which the correspondence is to be returned by the postal authorities in case of non-delivery to the addressee. The trade mark or other similar distinctive imprint of a firm may properly be used on the envelope, but only in cases where it will not tend to confuse or crowd the essential wording. The name of the person to whom the letter is to be returned is of considerable more practical value to the postman than a unique design with which the envelope may be adorned.

The letterhead offers wider opportunities for an array of data. Pictures of offices, buildings and factories, trade marks, lists of branch offices, cable codes and the names of officers and executive heads may be used, but too much reading matter leads to confusion. The tendency today is toward simplicity. The name and address of the firm, and the particular department or branch office from which the communication comes, is regarded as sufficient by many houses. The day of the letter-

head gay with birds-eye views of the plant and much extraneous information seems to be passing, and money that was once spent in elaborate designs and plates is now put into the "quality" of the letter paper—and quality is usually marked by dignified simplicity and directness.

Letterheads may be mechanically produced by several different processes that range widely in costs. The principal methods of printing letterheads are:

First: From type.

Second: From zinc or half-tone plates made from drawings—generally designated as "photo-engraving".

Third: From plates engraved on copper or steel.

Fourth: From lithograph plates, engraved on stone.

Fifth: From photogravure or similar engraved plates.

Generally speaking, letterheads printed from type are the cheapest. The costs of type composition for an ordinary letterhead will vary from fifty cents to four or five dollars, dependent upon the amount of work. The printing ranges in cost from one dollar a thousand sheets for one color to several times that amount, dependent upon the quality of ink and paper, and upon local conditions. Many concerns are discarding letterheads printed from type, as more individuality can be shown in some form of engraved or lithographed work.

Good results may often be secured from "line cuts" or zinc plates—which cost from five to ten cents a square inch, with a minimum charge ranging from fifty cents to a dollar—made from pen-and-ink drawings. Good and distinctive lettering may often be secured in this way, where type matter does not offer the same opportunities. The cost of printing from zinc plates is practically the same as the cost of printing from type. If the drawings are made in water color, "wash" or oil, or if they contain fine crayon or pencil shadings, the reproductions must be made from half-tone plates. These cost from twelve cents to twenty cents a square inch, with a minimum rate that usually is equivalent to the cost of ten square inches. Half-tones, however, can be printed only on an enamel or other smooth-surface paper, and cannot be used satisfactorily on a rough-surface paper as can zinc plates.

Copper or steel engravings are made from designs furnished either by the engraver or by some other designer. For simple engraved lettering such as is customarily used on business

stationery, the cost of a copper plate is about ten cents a letter. For elaborate designs the costs increase proportionately. Steel plates, which are more durable, cost about sixty per cent more. Printing from such plates is considerably more expensive than the two processes previously described. Engraved letterheads cost from six dollars upward a thousand for the printing, while the envelopes cost approximately two dollars and fifty cents a thousand. The envelopes are usually printed from steel dies, which cost about ten cents a letter.

For large orders of stationery, exceeding 20,000 sheets, lithography offers economies in price and other advantages that render it more practical than metal engraving. The design is engraved upon stone and printed from the stone block. While the initial costs of lithography are high, ranging from $25.00 to $100.00 for the engraving (with an average cost of about $50.00), the price of printing is so moderate as to make this form of production popular among extensive users of business paper. Lithography gives a smooth, uniform and permanent impression on the paper, and permits of an indeterminate "run." The cost of printing from lithographic plates is practically the same as from steel or copper plates. The savings effected in large orders is in the cost of the plates, for copper and steel must be renewed as they become worn down.

The photogravure process is costly both in the plate-making and in the printing. While it gives a rich and uniform impression on the letter paper, and is highly valuable for reproducing pictures and ornate designs, it is adaptable only for special purposes and is not generally regarded as suitable for commercial work. A photogravure plate costs from seventy-five cents to one dollar and twenty-five cents a square inch, or about $12.00 to $50.00 for a letterhead. The printing costs about the same as for other engraved stationery. With other processes, somewhat similar in the market, this method of printing letterheads has not yet won extensive favor.

It is now almost universally recognized that a letter should be written on one side of the sheet only.

A copy should be kept of every communication that leaves the office. Either a carbon copy may be made at the time the letter is written—six good copies can be made simultaneously on the average typewriter, although one is usually sufficient—or a let-

ter-press copy can be made from the sheet after it is signed. Both forms have been accepted by the courts as legal copies of correspondence.

Such copies are usually filed alphabetically either by the name of the company or individual to whom the letter is addressed.

Letter-press copies must necessarily be filed chronologically, even when separate books for each letter of the alphabet are maintained. In either case the search through the files for a letter copy is facilitated by placing the name, address and date of a letter at the top.

For the same reason the date of a letter should be placed in the upper right corner of the page; the recipient must know when the communication is sent; it may have a bearing on other communications. The name and address of the addressee, similar to the address on the envelope, should in all cases be placed, as the formal salutation, in the upper left corner of the sheet, whether the correspondent be greeted "Dear Sir" or "Gentlemen." Not only does this establish at once the exact individual for whom the communication is intended but it facilitates the filing of the correspondence, both by the recipient and by the sender.

The margins of a business letter, owing to the limitations of the typewriter, are usually variable. The space occupied by the letterhead must, of course, determine the margin at the top of the sheet. Theoretically, the margins at the left and right should be exactly the same size; practically, however, the typewriter lines will vary in length and cause an uneven edge on the right side. In printing, the use of many-sized spaces not only between words but at times, between the letters themselves rectifies these variations, but the typewriter does not permit this. The more even the right margin is and the more uniform it is to the left margin, the better the effect. The margins should be about one and a half inches in width. The margin at the bottom should not be less than the side margins. Should it be smaller, the page will appear cramped for space as the reading matter will be really running over into the margin—a typographical defect that is as noticeable on typewritten as on printed pages.

The spacing between the lines and between the paragraphs of a business letter may vary to suit the tastes of the individual.

although considerations of a practical nature tend to establish a few general principles.

Both for purposes of convenience and of economy, a letter should be as compact as possible, both in words and in mechanical production. It should not take up two sheets if the message can be written on one without undue crowding. Hence most business letters are single spaced; that is, only one space on the typewriter separates the lines. Even when a letter is short, it is advisable for purposes of uniformity, to use single spaces only.

The first line of each paragraph is usually indented from five to fifteen points on the machine. Each business house should establish exactly what this indentation shall be in order to secure uniformity in its correspondence. Instead of indenting the first line, some concerns designate the paragraphs merely by separating them by double spacings, beginning the first line flush with the left margin. The best practice, however, seems to embody both of these methods, but the average business letter usually has its paragraphs separated by double spacing and indenting the first line.

The address on the envelope, to which the salutation at the top of the letter should correspond, either exactly or in slightly condensed form, may be properly typewritten in various ways. The style that is most observed, however, and which has the stamp of general approval, provides for an indentation of about five points on each line of the address.

Between the lines the spacings may be either single or double but the latter is preferable. Greater spacing tends to separate the address too much to allow it to be read quickly.

Another approved, though less popular form of address does not indent the lines at all.

Any radical departure from these forms should be made cautiously, especially if the various items of the address are separated from each other.

The address, like a paragraph, is generally read as a unit—as a single, distinct idea. The closer the address conforms to the generally accepted forms, the more readily are the envelopes handled by the postoffice and the less danger of delay.

Getting a UNIFORM *Policy* and *Quality* in Letters

EVERY CORRESPONDENT *naturally reflects his own personality in his letters. His distinguishing characteristics, good, bad and indifferent, inevitably tend to find expression in his correspondence*—UNLESS THOSE TENDENCIES ARE GUIDED. *That is exactly what the modern business house does. It directs the work of its correspondents by means of general and specific rules as well as by instruction in the policies of the house until all of its letters are uniform in quality and bear the stamp of a consistent personality—the personality of "the house"*

A NUMBER of years ago, the president of a company manufacturing carriages felt that he was not getting adequate results for the money he was spending in the mail sales department. One day he called a meeting of all his correspondents and asked each man what arguments he used in writing to prospects. He discovered that eight correspondents were using eight different lines of talk. One emphasized this feature of the carriage, a second based his argument on another feature, and no two correspondents were reaching prospects from the same angle or making use of the same arguments.

"Here are eight different approaches," said the president. "It is certain that one of these must be more effective than the other seven. They can't all be best. It is up to us to test them out and determine which one *is* best and then we will all use it."

When the proposition was presented in this way, it was so elementary that everyone wondered why it had not been thought of before. A series of tests followed with the different arguments and presentations and by a process of elimination the company proved conclusively which was the strongest approach. Then all of the correspondents used it in the first letter and the second strongest argument was used in the second letter, and so on through the follow-up. It was no longer left for each man to develop his arguments and his selling talk according to his own ideas. Through tests, consultation and discussion, every point was considered and all the correspondence was on the same level.

By adopting a uniform policy the efficiency of the sales department was increased, the quality of the letters was raised and the work was handled more expeditiously and more economically.

One cannot write to all his customers and prospects; that is why it is necessary to have correspondents in the various departments. It is an easy matter to adopt rules and establish policies that will make their letters of a much higher standard and give them greater efficiency than if each went his own way without rule or regulation to guide him. Every correspondent represents the house in a dignified manner and handles the subjects intrusted to his care in a way that will reflect the best thought and the most successful methods of the house. Not everyone can be developed into a master correspondent but it is possible to establish a policy and enforce rules that will give quality and at least a fair measure of salesmanship to all letters.

Many businesses have grown so rapidly and the heads have been so absorbed in the problems of production and extending markets that little time or thought has been given to the work of the correspondents. And so it happens that in many concerns the correspondence is handled according to the whims, the theories and the personality of the various men who are in charge of the different departments. But there are other concerns that have recognized the desirability of giving individuality to all the mail that bears a house message. They have found that the quality can be keyed up and the letters, even though they may be written in a dozen different departments, all have the family resemblance and bear evidence of good parentage.

And it may be certain that when all the letters from a house impart this tone, this atmosphere of quality and distinction, it is

not because of chance. It is not because the correspondents all happen to use a similar policy. Such letters imply a deliberate, persistent, intelligent effort to keep the correspondence from falling below a fixed level. Such a policy represents one of the finer products of the process of systematically developing all the factors in modern business—the stamping of a strong individuality upon all of the correspondence of a large organization.

To secure this uniformity in policy and in quality, it is necessary to adopt a set of clear, comprehensive rules and to impress upon the correspondents the full significance of the standing, the character and the traditions of the house.

There are certain tendencies on the part of some correspondents that can be overcome by a general rule. For instance, there are the correspondents who try to be funny in their letters. Attempts at humor should be forbidden for the day has gone when the salesman can get orders by telling a funny story. Another correspondent may deal too largely in technicalities in his letters, using words and phrases that are not understood.

Then there is the correspondent who has an air of superiority in his letters and writes with impudence and his letters suggest a condescension on his part to explain a proposition; or the complaint department may have a man who grants an allowance or makes an adjustment but puts a sting into his letter that makes the reader wish he had never patronized the house. All such tendencies may be eradicated by a set of rules giving specific instruction on how to handle every point that comes up and the attitude that is to be assumed in answering complaints, collecting accounts, making sales, and so forth.

And in order to have the letters reflect the house, rules have been adopted in some cases that cover every conceivable point from a broad policy in handling arguments to a specific rule regarding the use of commas.

For instance, it is no longer left to the discretion of the correspondent to start his letter "John Smith." A rule provides that all letters shall begin "Mr. John Smith." For the sake of dignity, a western mail-order house decided to use "Dear Sir" and "Dear Madam" in the first three letters that went to a customer. But on the third and succeeding letters this house uses the salutation "Dear Mr. Smith" or "Dear Mrs. Smith."

This is a matter of policy, a rule that will keep the letters up to a fixed standard.

Page from One Firm's Book of Rules:

In a long letter, or where two or more subjects are treated, each subject must be introduced with an appropriate subhead.

All letters, long or short, must carry a general subject head between the address and the first paragraph. This general head and the subheads must be in capitals, underscored with a single line, and as nearly as possible in the middle of the sheet from right to left.

Carefully avoid even the appearance of sarcasm.

Be wary of adjectives, particularly superlatives. "Very," "great," "tremendous," "excellent," etc., have marred many an otherwise strong phrase and have propped needlessly many a good word, all-sufficient of itself.

Never use the first personal pronoun "I" when writing as Blank Company. "We" is the proper pronoun. Where a personal reference is necessary, "the writer" may be used; but even this should be avoided wherever possible.

Don't forget that certain small words are in the language for a purpose. "And," "a," "the," are important, and their elimination often makes a letter bald, curt, and distinctly inelegant.

Carefully avoid such words and stock phrases as "beg to acknowledge," "beg to inquire," "beg to advise," etc. Do not "beg" at all.

Do not say "kindly" for "please."

Do not say "Enclosed herewith." Herewith is superfluous.

Do not "reply" to a letter; "answer" it. You answer a letter and reply to an argument.

In determining a uniformity in policy and quality, the rules may be grouped in three classes: those which determine the attitude of the writer; those that relate to the handling of subject matter; and then there are specific rules, such as the style of paper, the salutation, the subscription, signature. and so forth.

The attitude and policy of the house must be determined according to the nature of the business and the ideas of the management. The same rules will not apply to all houses but this does not lessen the desirability of an established policy. For instance, one large corporation, selling entirely to dealers and to large contractors, forbids the use of the first person singular. Under no consideration is the correspondent per-

mitted to say "I". And if a personal reference is absolutely necessary, he must refer to "the writer". The rule is to say "we" and the correspondents are urged to avoid this personal pronoun, using the name of the company, as, "It has always been the practice of the Workwell Company," and so on.

Most mail-order houses, on the other hand, get just as far away from this formal attitude as possible. Here it is the policy to get up close to the reader by a "you-and-me" attitude. Some mail-order houses have letters written in the name of the company, signed by the writer as department manager, sales manager, or other officer. Then there are other houses that omit the company name entirely in order to get away from the "soulless corporation" idea as much as possible, and letters to a customer are always signed by the same individual to get a personal relationship that is considered a most valuable asset. This does not mean merely the matter of the signature, but the entire attitude of the letter. "Address your reply to me personally" is the spirit of these firms—a policy that has been adopted after tests have demonstrated that it is the one appeal most effective with the average mail-order customer.

A large concern aims to make its points stand out more clearly by having the arguments presented in a one, two, three order, and each paragraph is introduced with a subject printed in capitals at the beginning of the first line, such as *Location*, *Terms*, *Guarantee*. This company, dealing in lands, usually finds it necessary to write rather lengthy letters and the subject heads serve as guide-posts and tend to concentrate attention.

One firm has barred all superlative adjectives, not merely to guard against exaggeration but because the superlative degree lacks conviction. The statement that "This is the best collar ever made" is not believed, but to say that it is a "fine" collar or a "good" collar for it is five-ply, and so forth, rings true. It is a better selling talk and so the superlative is not permitted.

Then there are other general policies that concerns have adopted, such as a rule that the price of articles cannot be mentioned in a letter. A printed enclosure gives this information and reference may be made to it, but the dollar mark does not appear in the letter itself. This policy has been adopted to emphasize upon readers the fact that the company quotes but one price to all, and it makes an effective selling talk out of

the point that special discounts and "inside prices" are never given. As confidence is always the first essential in building up a mail-order business, this policy has done much towards increasing the standing and reputation of the houses using it.

And then come certain specific instructions covering a multitude of details. For instance, the style of paper is a matter that progressive business houses no longer ignore. The policy of the house may be revealed in the envelope and letter paper before one has had time to read even the date line. Some firms provide different grades of stationery for different departments, the sales letters going out in a much finer dress than letters from other departments.

The style to use is largely a matter of personal taste and preference. The significant thing is not in the kind that is used by certain companies but the fact that progressive business houses now appreciate the necessity for a uniformity in stationery and in the manner of handling it.

Harmony of color is especially desirable—the tint of the paper, the color of the lithographing, embossing or printing, the color of the typewriter ribbon used and the color of the ink used in signing. None of these points are too small to be considered in the progressive business houses today.

The closing is no less important than the opening and most rule books relieve the correspondent of all responsibility in deciding on what subscription to use or how to sign the letter. For instance, he is told that the house policy is to close with "Yours truly" and that the name of the company is written with the typewriter followed by the signature of the writer and his title, such as "President," or "Sales Manager."

A publishing house in the east for years clung to the established policy of having all letters go out in the name of the president. But it was finally decided by the executive committee that this policy tended to belittle the house, for it was obvious that no institution of any size could have all its mail handled directly from the president's office. It was argued that if the president's name were used only occasionally, greater prestige would be given to the letters that actually came from his office, and thereafter letters were signed by different department heads as "Manager of Sales," "Advertising Manager," "Managing Editor," "Manager of Collection Department," and so forth.

And just so one could go through the book of rules of any business house and find a good reason for every policy that has been adopted. For while it is desirable to have a "family resemblance" which is possible only through established rules, and while letters written under specific instructions have added dignity and character, yet there is back of each rule some additional significance, the force of some tested argument, the psychological effect of some timely suggestion.

No longer do large manufacturing and mercantile houses send out their salesmen and allow each one to push his line as he sees best. Many concerns require the salesmen to take a regular course of training to learn thoroughly the "house" attitude, and they are given instructions on the best way to present arguments and overcome objections—just so the men who sell by letter are now instructed in the best methods for getting results.

The best way to secure a uniform policy is a practical question. Some houses employ a correspondent expert to spend a few weeks in the correspondence department just the same as an expert auditor is employed to systematize the accounting department. In other houses the book of rules is a matter of evolution, the gradual adding of new points as they come up and as policies are tried out, a process of elimination determining those that should be adopted. In some concerns the correspondents have regular meetings to discuss their problems and to decide upon the best methods of meeting the situations that arise in their work. They read letters that have pulled, analyze the arguments and in this way try to raise the quality of their written messages.

While it must be admitted that some men have a natural faculty of expressing themselves clearly and forcibly, the fact remains that letter writing is an art that may be acquired. It necessitates a capacity to understand the reader's attitude; it requires careful study and analysis of talking points, arguments and methods of presentation, but there is no copyright on good letters and any house can secure a high standard and be assured that distant customers are handled tactfully and skilfully if a uniform policy is worked out and systematically applied.

Making Letters UNIFORM In *Appearance*

BUSINESS STATIONERY *should reflect the house that sends it out but unless specific rules are adopted there will be a lack of uniformity in arrangement, in style, in spelling, in folding—all the little mechanical details that contribute to an impression of* CHARACTER *and* INDIVIDUALITY. *Definite instructions should be given to correspondents and stenographers so that letters, although written in a dozen different departments, will have a uniformity in appearance. What a book of instructions should contain and how rules can be adopted is described in this chapter*

JUST as progressive business houses now aim to have their correspondence uniform in policy and quality, so too, they aim at uniformity in letter appearance—the mechanical production. It is obvious that if the letters sent out by a house are to have character, one style must be adopted and definite rules must be formulated for the guidance of the stenographers. The authorities differ on many points such as the use of capital letters, abbreviations, the use of figures, and so forth, and it is not to be expected that stenographers, trained at different schools and working in different departments, could produce uniformity unless they all follow specific instructions.

And so the more progressive firms have adopted a fixed style and codified certain rules for the guidance of stenographers and typists. In the writing of a letter there are so many points that are entirely a matter of personal taste that a comprehensive

rule book touches an almost infinite number of subjects, ranging from an important question of house policy to the proper way of folding the sheet on which the letter is written.

It is not the purpose of this chapter to give a summary of the rules for punctuation and capitalization or to pass judgment on questions of style, but to emphasize the necessity for uniformity in all correspondence that a house sends out, and to call attention to a few of the more common errors that are inexcusable.

As far as the impression created by an individual letter is concerned, it really makes very little difference whether the paragraphs are indented or begin flush with the line margin. But it is important that all the letters sent out by a house follow the same style. A stenographer should not be permitted to use the abbreviation "Co." in one part of her letter and spell out the word "company" in the following paragraph.

In formulating the rules, two things should be kept in mind-clearness, to make the meaning of the writer plain; and a pleasing appearance that will make a favorable impression upon the reader. The sole purpose of punctuation marks is to help convey a thought so clearly that it cannot be misunderstood and experienced writers learn to use the proper marks almost intuitively. The rules are applied unconsciously. Many correspondents in dictating designate the beginning and the close of each sentence but others leave this to the intelligence of t e stenographer, and there is no better rule for those to whom such matters are left than to be liberal in the use of periods. Avoid long, involved sentences. There is little danger of misunderstanding in short sentences.

Most of the rules can be made hard and fast—a simple regulation to do this or to avoid that. They should begin with the date line. Instructions should be given as to the place for the date line: whether it should be written on one or two lines and whether the month should be expressed in figures or should be spelled out, and whether the year should be printed in full or abbreviated. There is a growing tendency to use figures, such as 10–15–10, and supplementary letters, such as "rd," "th," and so forth, are being eliminated. Some firms are placing the date at the bottom of the letter at the left hand margin, although for convenience in making a quick reference the date line at the top of the letter is much to be preferred.

A Page of Instructions to Stenographers:

City and date must be written about three spaces below the lowest printed matter on letterhead, as follows: Chicago, date single space below, regulated so that it will precede and extend beyond "Chicago" an equal distance, the end of date being in line with margin of body of letter; spell the month in full, followed by the date in figures, after which use comma; add year in figures and end with period.

Commence letter by addressing customer, then double space and follow with city and state (do not give street address) except where window envelope is to be used; double space and address as "Dear Sir" or "Madam." Also double space between this salutation and first paragraph.

Paragraphs must begin ten points from margin on a line with city. Use single space, with double space between paragraphs.

In closing use the phrase "Yours very truly" and sign "The Wilson-Graham Company." Have correspondent's and stenographer's initials on line with margin on left hand side of sheet. Margins must be regulated by length of letter to be written, using your judgment in this respect.

The half size letterhead should be used for very short letters.

Envelopes must be addressed double space, with beginning of name, street address, city and state on marginal line, as per sample attached.

The points that are suggested here, however, are entirely a matter of taste. There is no court of last resort to which appeal can be made as to the better method. Each house must use its own judgment. The important thing is to secure uniformiy.

Rules should govern the name of the addressee, whether it should be prefaced by such titles as "Mr." or "Messrs." The form of the salutation, the size of the margin, the spacing between lines and between paragraphs, the indentation of paragraphs, if any—all of these points should be covered by rules. The subscription, the placing of the dictator's and the stenographer's initials are all proper subjects for the instruction book.

The use of capital letters is a disputed question with writers, printers and proofreaders. But there is a growing tendency to use the small letters wherever possible. One large firm in the east has this rule:

"When in doubt regarding the use of a capital letter, don't. Use a small letter."

A great many business houses, for the sake of emphasis, capitalize the names of their own products. For instance:

"In this Catalogue you will find listed a very complete line of Countershafts, Magnetos, Induction Coils, Lubricators, Mufflers, Spark Coils, and a complete line of automobile accessories."

There is no rule that justifies such capitalization but it is a common practice in business correspondence.

There are some correspondents who write a word or a sentence in capital letters for emphasis. Occasionally this may be done to advantage but the tendency is to overwork the scheme. At best it is a lazy man's way of trying to secure emphasis without the mental exertion of thinking up some figure of speech or some original expression that will give force to his thought.

The rule book should help out the stenographer in the use of numbers and prices. Usage and a practical viewpoint both commend the use of figures for expressing sums of money. "Twelve hundred dollars" may be understood but it takes longer to write and does not make such a sharp image in the mind of the reader as $1,200. A common rule for figures is to spell out numbers under one hundred and to use numerals for larger amounts.

The use of abbreviations should be restricted and an inflexible rule should be never to use a man's initials or abbreviate his given name if he spells it out. If you find by a letterhead that the one to whom you are writing spells out the name of his state it is wise to follow the trail.

The errors in punctuation found in business correspondence are of infinite variety, although a surprising number of stenographers make similar errors in using hyphens for dashes and in misplacing quotation marks. Here is a common error:

"A model No. 8,--the one we exhibited at the Business Show last week,--has been sold to a customer in New Zealand."

There is no excuse for the comma used in connection with the dash and yet this construction is found in letters every day.

Unfortunately most typewriters do not have a dash and so the hyphen is used, but stenographers should be instructed to use two or, better yet, three hyphens without spacing (—), rather than a single hyphen as is so frequently seen. Here is a sentence in which the girl was versatile enough to combine two styles in one sentence:

"The auto-although it was completely overhauled a few days ago - could not be started."

In the first place, the single hyphen gives the appearance of a compound word, and placing a space on each side is scarcely less objectionable. Insist upon two or three hyphens without spaces when a dash is wanted.

Quotation marks are another stumbling block. There is no occasion to put the name of well-known books, magazines, and newspapers in quotation marks. If you refer to Harper's Monthly the reader will get your meaning just as well without the quotation marks. Many stenographers in writing a sentence that ends with a quoted word place the quotation mark first and the period or question mark following, as:

Johnson's last words to me were: "I will accept your terms".

Put the period inside the fence where it belongs. This is a rule that is violated more often than it is observed, the confusion coming from an occasional exception where a punctuation mark has nothing to do with the quotation, as in the sentence:

May we not send you a trial order of our "X Brand"?

Here it is plain that the question mark should follow the quotation mark. There is no excuse for the frequent misplac-

ing of these marks, for the quoted part of a sentence invariably shows the proper position for each mark.

A chapter could be filled with errors to be avoided—only a few of the most common ones are mentioned here. This reference to them may suggest to the heads of correspondence departments the range of points to be covered in a rule book.

Some rule books go further and devote pages to faulty diction that must be avoided and print lists of words that should not be used and words that are "preferred".

The folding of the typewritten page usually comes in for a rule and instructions are generally given regarding corrections —whether the pen can be used at all or if letters must be rewritten.

With these rules laid down for the guidance of the stenographer, her mind is left free for other things that will contribute to her usefulness. It is no reflection on their knowledge of correct English to say that the majority of correspondents, working under high pressure, make mistakes that the stenographer must catch. It is extremely easy in dictating to mix up the tenses of verbs and to make other slips which most letter writers look to their stenographers to correct. It should be a hard and fast rule that an ungrammatical letter must never be sent out under any circumstances. Some correspondents not only look to the stenographer to edit their "copy" but to come back for a new dictation if the meaning of a letter is not perfectly clear. The thought is that if the stenographer does not understand it, there is danger of its being misinterpreted by the one to whom it is addressed.

Many rule books include a list of trade terms and phrases that the most expert stenographer may never have met with in their previous work. Legal terms are especially difficult to take down until a girl has become familiar with the unknown Latin words. This may also be said of technical terms, mechanical terms, architectural and building terms, and so forth. It is a saving of time and annoyance in many offices to have a list of frequently used words that the new stenographer can study before she attempts to take dictations.

It is not likely that any two business houses could adopt the same rules throughout. But this does not lessen the desirability of having specific instructions covering all these points, for without uniformity, the letters will not have the character, the dignity and the individuality that is desired by every concern.

How to Write the *Letter* That Will "LAND" the *Order*

SELLING goods is considered the biggest problem in the business world. Hard as it is to close a deal with the prospect right before you, it is infinitely harder to get his order when he is miles away and you must depend upon a typewritten sheet to interest him in your proposition sufficiently to buy your goods. Methods that have succeeded are described in this chapter and samples of order-bringing letters are given

THE letter that is sent out unaided to make its own approach, open its own canvass and either complete a sale or pave the way to a sale may be called "the original sales letter." There has been no inquiry, no preliminary introduction of any kind. The letter is simply the substitute for the salesman who voluntarily seeks out his own prospect, presents his proposition and tries to land an order.

Such a letter undertakes a big task. It has a more difficult mission than the personal salesman, for it cannot alter its canvass on the spot to suit the prospect's mood. It must have its plan complete before it goes into the mail. It must be calculated to grip the attention, impel a reading, prompt a favorable decision and get back, in the return envelope, an order or at least a request for further information.

The letter that can do that, a letter so clever and so convincing that it makes a man a thousand miles away put his hand into his pocket, take out his hard earned cash and buy a money order; or makes the shrewd man at the desk take up his pen,

write a check and send it for the goods you have to sell, is a better employee than your star salesman because it gets the order at a fraction of the cost. And the man who can write the letter that will do that is a power in the business world—his capacity is practically unlimited.

Original sales letters are of two kinds: those that endeavor to perform the complete operation and secure the order and those that are intended merely as the first of a follow-up series or campaign. Which to use will depend upon the nature and cost of your proposition. A simple, low-priced article may be sold with a single letter—the margin of profit may not warrant more than that. On an expensive, complicated article you cannot hope to do more in the initial letter than win your prospect's interest, or possibly start him toward the dealer who sells your goods.

Consider first the former. You are to write a single letter and make it an attention-getting, interest-winning, complete, convincing, order-bringing medium. There is no better way to do this than to put yourself in the position of the salesman who must do all these things in a single interview. You really must do more than the salesman, but this is the best way to get in your own mind the proper attitude toward your prospect.

Say to yourself, "I am now going into this man's office. He does not know me and does not know I am coming. This is the only chance I have to see him and I shall probably never see him again. I must concentrate all my knowledge of my proposition on this one selling talk and must tell him everything I can about it that will make him want to buy. I must say it in such a way that he will clearly understand; I must give him a good reason for buying today and I must make it easy for him to do so."

Then picture yourself in his office, seated beside his desk and proceed to *talk* to him. Above all, keep in mind that you are talking to *one* man. No matter if your letter is to go to ten thousand people, each letter is individual. Remember, it goes to one person. So when you write it, aim directly at one person.

And *see* him in your mind's eye. Get as clear an idea as you can of the class your letter is going to and then picture the average man in that class. The best way is to pick out some

friend or acquaintance who most nearly represents the class you want to reach and write the letter to him. You'll be surprised how much easier it is when you have a definite person in mind. And your letter will then be sure to have that much desired "personal touch."

Of prime importance in this single sales letter is the close, the clincher. Your one big purpose is to get the order, and no matter how clever you may be three-fourths of the way through, if the letter falls short of clinching the order in the end, it may as well not have been written at all.

Here is an excellent example of one of these complete letters. Note particularly the summing up, the guarantee offer and how easy the writer makes it to order:

HOW TO GET A POSITION
AND HOW TO HOLD IT

is the title of a little book that business men and editors say is the most sensible and helpful thing ever printed on its subject Contains the boiled-down experience of years. Written by an expert correspondent and high-salaried writer of business literature who has hunted positions for himself, who has been all along the road up to places where he, in turn, has advertised for employees, read their letters, interviewed and engaged them --who is now with a company employing 2700 of both sexes and all grades from the $3 a week office boy to a $75 a-week specialist.

HOW TO GET A POSITION AND HOW TO HOLD IT treats of what one should be able to do before expecting to find a good position; takes up the matter of changes; advises how long to hold the old position; tells what kind of a new position to try for; explains the various ways of getting positions; suggests how the aid of prominent people can be enlisted; shows the kind of endorsements that count; teaches how to write letters of application that COMMAND attention; gives hints on preparing for the interview and on how to make the best impression; tells what should be done when you are selected for a position and take up your duties; deals with the question of salary before and after the engagement; with the bugbear of experience; the matter of hours; and gives pages of horse-sense on a dozen other important topics. The clear instructions for writing strong letters of application, and the model letters shown, are alone worth the price of the book. Not one in a hundred--even among the well-educated--can write a letter of application that convinces.

How many of yours fail? The engagement usually depends on the interview; and the interview cannot, as a rule, be obtained without the impressive letter. Consequently, the letter is of tremendous importance

If you carry out the suggestions set down in plain language in this little book, you can hardly fail to land a position. And I am offering the book for twenty-five cents a copy. Just think of it! The principles and plans outlined in its pages have been the means of securing high-salaried positions for its author and for others, and this valuable information is yours for the price of five car rides.

This is my offer: Send me a 25-cent piece in the enclosed coin-card, or twenty-five cents in stamps, and I'll mail you a copy of HOW TO GET A POSITION AND HOW TO HOLD IT. If, after reading the book, you do not feel it is worth many times its cost, just tell me so and return the copy in good condition. I'll send your money back without any quibbling. Could any offer be fairer?

Order today--now. Next week there may come to your notice an opening that may be the chance of a lifetime--when my little book will be worth its weight in gold. Besides, it tells how to create openings when none are advertised. You need not write me a letter. Just write your full name and address on the back of this sheet and wrap your stamps up in it, or put your name and address on the coin-card after you have enclosed the 25-cent piece. I'll understand.

Write plainly. I am selling the book so cheaply that I cannot afford to have any copies go astray in the mails.

Yours truly,

Now as to the other kind of original sales letter—the one that is merely the first of a series of three or more letters skillfully planned to build up interest until the climax, the purchasing point is reached. This letter is really a combination of the two kinds. If you can land the order with the first letter, you want to, of course. But you know you can expect to do this only in a small percentage of cases. So while you must put into the initial letter enough information to make your proposition clear and must give at least one good reason for buying, you must keep good convincing sales talk in reserve for the succeeding letters. And you must plan this first letter so that the re-enforcements to follow will logically support your introduction.

This can best be illustrated by a clever first letter from a very successful series. The manufacturer of a $5 fireless cooker planned a letter campaign to induce hardware dealers and department stores to buy a stock of his product.

The first sales letter of the series scored strongly on one or two points and at the same time paved the way for the second letter:

Dear Sir:

Are you ready for the woman who wants a fireless cooker but can't pay ten or fifteen dollars?

The aggressive advertising done by the manufacturers of fireless cookers and the immense amount of reading matter published in women's magazines about the fireless method of cooking has stirred up a big demand.

But just figure out how many of your customers can't afford to pay $10, $12 or $15.

Think of the sales that could be made with a thoroughly reliable cooker at $5--one that you could feel safe in standing back of.

It's here!

We had the $15-idea, and we worked out the prettiest cooker you ever saw at any price. But we got together one day and figured out that the big market was for a low-priced cooker that every woman could buy.

How to get a Jenkins-quality cooker, one that a retailer would be proud to sell, down to the retail price of $5 was the question. But we figured our manufacturing up into the tens of thousands, and the enclosed folder tells about the result.

Our advertising next month in the Woman's Home Companion, Ladies' Home Journal, Ladies' World, Good Housekeeping, Everybody's, Cosmopolitan and McClures will do big things for you if you have the Jenkins $5 Fireless Cooker in your window.

We have a good sized stock on hand but they won't last long the way orders are coming in from far-sighted retailers.

How would a dozen do as a starter for you?

Yours truly,

Black + Black

A letter of this kind should be effective because it gives enough information to make a sale in case the reader is an unusually good prospect, and at the same time it lays a good foundation for the second letter.

Are you willing to make more money on soap?

Yes, we suppose you are carrying many soaps, but when a distinctive soap is advertised as thoroughly as we are advertising WESINOD, it actually creates new trade, and of course you aren't sorry to see new faces in the store.

WESINOD SOAP has the curative and beneficial effects of Resinol Ointment, which is now used so extensively by the medical profession.

WESINOD SOAP is more than a cleanser: it is a restorer, preserver and beautifier of the skin, and as such is attracting the favorable attention of women.

Enclosed is a reproduction of our advertisement in the magazines this month and a list of the magazines in which the copy appears.

We are educating 10,000,000 readers to feel the need of WESINOD SOAP.

A supply of our liberal samples and a trial order to be used in a window display will show you the possibilities.

May we send samples and a trial gross?

Yours for more soap money,

WESINOD SOAP COMPANY

This is a strong selling letter that interests the reader, disarms his natural objection to adding an additional line of soap and presents briefly convincing reasons for stocking with Wesinod. While this letter is intended to get the order, it effectively paves the way for further correspondence

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It is unnecessary to take up here the elements that should go into the sales letter—attention, interest, argument, proof, persuasion, inducement and the clincher. But it is well to emphasize three points that are especially important in the original letter in the series: confidence, price and the close.

You may be sure, that unless you win the confidence of your prospect from the start, your whole campaign is going to be a waste of time, paper and postage. Distrust and prejudice, once started, are hard things to overcome by mail, particularly

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Dear Sir:

"If your magazine pulls as well as the Blank Monthly I will give you a twelve-page contract."

That remark wasn't meant for our ears, but one of our solicitors couldn't help overhearing it. It was made by a prominent advertiser, too. We wish we could give his name, but when we asked permission to quote he smiled and said he'd rather not. So, we'll have to refer you to our advertising pages.

But the remark speaks pretty well for the Blank Monthly, doesn't it? It's not surprising, though. The Blank Monthly goes into 151,000 homes. It is taken and read by the best class of technical, scientific and mechanically inclined men, representing one of the choicest classes of buyers in America.

Our subscribers are great buyers of things by mail. Dozens of our advertisers have proved it. They don't sell shoddy or cheap goods, either. That's why we believe your advertising will pay in the Blank Monthly. If we didn't believe it, we shouldn't solicit your business.

Try your copy in the June issue, which goes to press on April 27—last form May 6.

If you send copy TODAY, you will be sure to get in.

Very truly yours,

M. O. Williams

The quoted language gives the opening of this letter an interesting look. The first three paragraphs are strong. The fourth paragraph is merely assertive, and is weak. A fact or two from some advertiser's experience would be much better

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when you are a concern or individual unknown to the man to whom you are writing.

And so with this in mind, be careful of the tone of your letter. Be earnest, make reasonable statements, appeal to the intelligence or the experience of the reader and deal with specific facts rather than with mere assertions or claims. There is no

inspiration to confidence in the time-worn claims of "strongest," "best," and "purest". Tell the facts. Instead of saying that an article is useful in a dozen different ways, mention some of the ways. When you declare that the cylinder of your mine pump is the best in the world, you are not likely to be believed; the statement slips off the mind like the proverbial water from a duck's back. But when you say that the cylinder is made of close-grained iron thick enough to be rebored, if necessary, you have created a picture that does not call for doubt. But watch out that you don't start an argument. Brander Mathews gives us a great thought when he says that "controversy is not persuasion." Don't write a letter that makes the reader feel that he is being argued into something. Give him facts and suggestions that he can't resist; let him feel that he has convinced himself. This paragraph fails of its purpose, simply because it argues. You can almost picture the writer as being "peevish" because his letters haven't pulled:

"This stock is absolutely the safest and most staple you could buy. It will positively pay regular dividends. We stand back of these statements. You must admit, therefore, that it is a good buy for you. So why do you hesitate about buying a block of it?"

On the other hand, this appeals to the investor because it has genuine proof in it:

"No stockholder of ours has lost a dollar through fluctuation in the price of the stock, though we have been doing business for fifteen years. Our stock has been readily salable at all times. No dividend period has ever been missed. The quarterly dividend has never been less than 2½ per cent. During the depression of 1907-1908 our stock maintained itself at 40 per cent above par when other industrial stocks were dropping to par or below. Surely, here is an investment worth your investigation."

Telling specific facts helps to produce conviction as well as to create confidence. Not every one is a genius in the handling of words, but every writer of a letter that is to bristle with conviction must use his imagination. He must put himself

mentally in the place of the typical customer he is addressing and use the arguments and facts that would convince him. The writer should try to see himself enjoying the foods or service—picture his satisfaction. Then he has a better chance of reproducing his picture in the mind of the reader.

For instance, read this paragraph of idle assertions:

"Buy our hams once and you will buy them always. All of our meat is from young hogs, and is not tough, but is high-grade. Nothing but corn-fed stock is used. We guarantee the quality. We use good sugar in curing our hams, the best quality of saltpeter and some salt. The result is a natural flavor that can't be beat. We challenge competition."

And now contrast it with this real description of the same product, calculated to create confidence in the trademark it bears:

"This mark certifies that the hog came from good stock, that it was corn-fed in order that it might be firm and sweet--that it was a barrow hog, so that the meat would be full-flavored and juicy--that it was a young hog, making the ham thin-skinned and tender--well-conditioned and fat, insuring the lean of the ham to be tasty and nutritious. The mark certifies that the ham was cured in a liquor nearly good enough to drink, made of granulated sugar, pure saltpeter and only a very little salt; this brings out all the fine, rich, natural flavor of the carefully selected meat, and preserves it without 'salty pickling.'"

Note how much more graphic the second paragraph is than the first, and every statement is backed up by a logical reason.

The testimony of other people, especially of those in positions of authority and those who would not be suspected of bias, has much convincing power. There is nothing in the contention that "testimonials are out of date." They constitute the strongest kind of support. But get testimonials that really say something. The man who writes and says that he got out of the book he bought from you an idea that enabled him to make a profit of $50 the first week, says a thousand times more than the man who writes and merely says that he was pleased with his purchase.

Let price come in the letter just about where it would come in an oral canvass. The skillful salesman of high-priced shirts doesn't talk about the $3 price until he has shown the shirt and impressed the customer. If price is the big thing—is lower than the reader is likely to imagine it would be—it may be made the leading point and introduced at the outset, but unless it is an attraction, it should be held back until strong description has prepared the reader for the price.

The method of payment and delivery must be treated effectively in the closing paragraphs. The following plans all have their use:

Offer to send on free trial for ten days or longer;

Offer to send for free examination, payment to be made to express agent when examination has shown article to be satisfactory;

Offer to send on small payment, the small payment to be a guarantee against trifling, balance payable on examination;

Offer to sell on easy-payment plan;

Offer to sell for cash but with strong refunding guarantee;

Offer to supply article through local dealer on reader's authorization. With such an authorization, the advertiser has a good opening to stock the retailer.

The price feature offers one of the best opportunities to give the letter real inducement. If the price is in any sense a special price, make it clear that it is. Sometimes you can hang your whole letter on this one element.

Reduced price, if the reduction is set forth logically, is a strong feature. One publisher uses it in this fashion:

"We have just 146 sets of these books to sell at $18.50. When the new edition is in, it will be impossible to get a set at less than $25. The old edition is just as good as the new, but we are entirely out of circular matter describing the green cloth binding, and as we don't want to print a new lot of circulars just to sell 146 sets, we make this unusual offer. Now is your chance."

Advance in price is almost as strong. It's a lever to quick action:

"On the 1st of October the rate of the MESSENGER will go up to one dollar a line. If you place your order before the thirtieth of this month you can buy space to be used any time before January 1 next at seventy-five cents a line. After the thirtieth, positively no orders will be accepted at less than one dollar a line. As a matter of fact our circulation entitles us to a dollar a line right now.

"Don't let this letter be covered up on your desk. Attend to this matter now, or instruct your advertising agent to reserve space for you, and get a big bargain."

Price, in this case is, in fact, a part of the close. It spurs the reader to "order now."

Setting a time limit, in which a proposal holds good, is also a strong closer. A large book publisher finds it effective to make a discount offer good if accepted within a certain number of days.

Guarantee offers are strong. Don't content yourself with the old "absolutely guaranteed" expression. Be definite. "Order this buggy, and if, at the end of a month, you are not entirely satisfied that it is the biggest buggy value you ever had for the money, just write me, and I'll take the buggy back without quibbling. Could any offer be fairer? I make it because I've sold 246 of these buggies since January, and so far no man has asked for his money back."

The sum-up is as important a part of the sales letter as it is of the lawyer's speech or brief. It should concentrate the whole strength of the letter at the close, as, for instance:

"So you see that though our machine is apparently high-priced it is really cheaper by the year than another machine. Our offer of a free trial right in your own plant gives you absolute protection. It is quite natural, of course, for us to be desirous of getting your order, but we do not see how you can, from your own point of view, afford not to put the Bismarck in your factory."

And finally, help the prospect buy. The sales letter designed to bring the order must provide an easy method of ordering. In the first place, a great many people do not understand how to order. To others, making out an order is a task that is likely

to be postponed. By making it easy for the reader to fill out a blank with a stroke or two of the pen, while the effect of the letter is strong, a great many orders will be secured that would otherwise be lost.

It should be axiomatic that if a letter is expected to pull business through the mails it must place before the recipient every facility for making it easy and agreeable to reply and reply NOW. How this can best be done will be taken up more fully in a separate chapter on "Making It Easy to Answer."

One thing to remember particularly in the case of the original sales letter is that if possible it should have a definite scheme behind it. A reason for the offer, a reason for the letter itself.

A safe-deposit vault was well advertised by sending out letters that contained a special pass to the vault with the name of the reader filled in. Of course the letter gave a pressing invitation to call and allow the custodian to show the vault's interesting features.

Still another clever letter soliciting rentals of safe-deposit boxes proposed that in case the reader now had a box elsewhere, they would take the lease off his hands. In reality they merely gave him free rental until his other lease expired, but the scheme was cleverly planned.

A buggy maker wrote enclosing duplicate specifications of a buggy he had just had made for his own personal use, and suggested that he would have another made for the reader exactly like it and turned under the same careful supervision.

Letters that give the reader something or offer to give him something have similar effect. The letter about a new facial cream will command extra attention because of the small sample of the cream enclosed. In fact, one cold cream company finds it an effective plan to send a sample and a sales letter to druggists' mailing lists or to names taken from telephone books, telling the reader in the final paragraph that the cream can be purchased at the local drug store.

A letter offering a sample can of a high-grade coffee for the name of the reader's favorite grocer will bring a good response and afford the advertiser a strong hold on the grocer.

A favorite method of securing savings depositors is to send a good "savings letter" that offers a free home-savings bank or a vest-pocket saver.

Even calendars may be given out more effectively by sending a letter and telling the reader that a good calendar has been saved for him and asking him to call at the office.

A striking paragraph of a real estate dealer's soliciting letter is one that asserts that the dealer has a client with the cash who wants just about such a house as the reader of the letter owns.

A real estate dealer, whose specialty is farms, has this telling sentence in his original letter: "Somewhere there is a man who will buy your farm at a good price; I should like to find that man for you."

There is hardly a product or a proposition that does not offer opportunity to put some scheme behind the letter. And such a plan doubles the appeal of the original sales letter. But once more, remember, not to put all your ammunition into the first letter. Be prepared to come back in your second and third letters, not simply with varied repetitions, but with *more* reasons for buying. Make your first letter as strong as you can, but at the same time—pave the way.

The Letter That Will BRING an *Inquiry*

COMPARATIVELY *few propositions can be sold in the first letter; in most campaigns it is enough to stimulate a man's interest and get him to reply. This chapter gives specific schemes that have proved successful in pulling answers—in making an opening for the heavy artillery of the follow-up*

THINK what a problem you would have if you started out as a salesman to sell a certain article with no definite idea of where to find your prospects. You might interview a hundred men before you found one who was interested. That would be pretty slow and pretty expensive selling, wouldn't it?

And think what it would mean if you were to send out broadcast a thousand expensive booklets and follow-up letters only to receive one reply from the one man with whom you effected a point of contact. That, too, would be a prohibitively costly method of selling.

Yet one or both these methods would in many cases be necessary were it not for the inquiry-bringing letter. The inquiry letter is a "feeler"—the advance agent of the selling campaign. It goes broadcast to find and put its finger on the man who is interested or who can be interested, and his reply labels him as the man whom it is worth while for your salesman to see, or, who is at least worth the expense and endeavor of a follow-up series.

The inquiry letter is like the advertisement which asks you to send for a catalogue or booklet. The advertisement writer

believes that if you are interested enough to write for the booklet, you will be interested enough to read his sales letters, and possibly become a purchaser. It is the same with the inquiry-bringing letter. It is simply a sieve for sifting out the likely prospects from the great mass of persons, who for many reasons cannot be brought around into a buying mood concerning your proposition.

The great advantage of the letter which induces the recipient to express his interest in an inquiry, is that you not only make him put himself unconsciously under an obligation to read further details, but you give time for the thoughts that you have started to get in their work.

The fact that a man has decided to ask for more information and has put that decision in writing is of considerable psychological value.

The one thing the salesman hopes to find, and the one thing the letter writer strives to create,is a receptive mood on the part, of his prospect. The moment a man answers the inquiry-letter. he has put himself into a frame of mind where he waits for and welcomes your subsequent sales talk.

He looks forward with some interest to your second letter. At first there was just one person to the discussion. Now there are two.

In this respect the letter is like the magazine advertisement. Give all the details of a $500 piano in an advertisement of ordinary size, quoting the price at the close, and it is extremely unlikely to bring the reader to the point of deciding that he will buy the piano. It is better to deal with some point of interest about the piano and offer a fine piano book free.

And right here it is worthy of mention that interesting books with such titles as "How to Select a Piano," "How to Make Money in Real Estate," "Bank Stocks as an Investment," or "The Way to Have a Beautiful Complexion," make letters as well as advertisements draw inquiries of a good class.

In other words, offer an inducement, give your man a *reason* for answering.

When you have written a letter calculated to draw inquiries, put yourself in the position of the man who is to get it and read it through from his standpoint. Ask yourself whether *you* would answer it if you received it. Test it for a reason, an inducement, and see if it has the pulling power you want it to have.

If you are offering a book, for example, impress the reader with the real value of the book, magnify its desirability in his mind. A paper company does this admirably when it writes:

"The new Condax specimen book is a beautiful thing--not a mere book of paper samples, understand, but a collection of art masterpieces and hand-lettered designs, printed with rare taste on the various kinds of Condax papers. Many have told us it is the finest example of printing they have ever seen come from the press.

"We feel sure you would treasure the book just for its artistic merits, but we are not sending you one now because there is such a tremendous demand for it that we do not like to chance having a single copy go astray and we want yours to reach you personally. We are holding it for you and the enclosed card will bring it, carefully wrapped, by return mail."

Of course such a book must be designed to do the proper work when it gets into the hands of the reader.

It is a mistake to tell a great deal in the inquiry-bringing letter, unless you can reasonably hope to close a sale. A man will act on impulse in ordering a dollar article, but he isn't likely to be impulsive about an insurance policy. If you give him the entire canvass on an insurance policy at the first shot, it will have to be of extraordinary interest and convincing power to close the sale. The subject is new. The prospect has not had a chance to think over the facts. He is suspicious of your power; afraid of hastiness on his own part. He is likely to give himself the canvass and decide "No," before giving you any further chance.

Appeal to curiosity. Arouse interest and leave it unsatisfied.

Remember that your inquiry letter is a definite part of your campaign. Therefore it must be consistent with what is to follow and must pave the way naturally for it. Seek replies only from those who can use and can afford to buy the article you have to sell.

A maker of a specialty machine got out an inquiry letter along this line:

"If you are tired of a salaried job, if you want to get into a big-paying, independent business of your own, I have a proposition that will interest you."

Of course he got a big percentage of replies, for what man does not want a big-paying, independent business of his own? But when in his follow-up letter he stated his proposition, offering state rights to his machine for $5,000, he shot over the

Dear Sir:

I should like to have you consider buying the enclosed series of talks on advertising for use in your paper.

I am an expert advertising man and I have spent a great deal of time and energy on these talks. I know that they will produce results that will be very satisfactory to you for they are based on the real experience of an expert.

The price of these talks--that is, the right to use the talks and illustrations in your city--is $15, which you must admit is dirt cheap, considering the quality of the matter.

All the progressive publishers are jumping at the chance to get these talks at the low price I am quoting them.

If you do not accept my offer, one of your competitors will certainly do so, and you will lose prestige.

Hoping to hear from you at once and promising careful attention to your valued favors, I am

Truly yours,

This letter has an unfortunate beginning. The writer starts by considering his own interests rather than those of the publisher. It is not tactful to begin with "I want-to-sell-you-something" talk. The second paragraph is merely an egotistic statement. No facts are furnished to impress the publisher. In the third paragraph price is introduced before desire is created. The fourth paragraph is a palpable boast that will not be believed and an insinuation that the publisher addressed may not be progressive. The suggestion about the competitor is likely to arouse antagonism. The close is hackneyed and the entire letter is rather an advertisement of the writer's inability rather than of his ability

heads of 99 per cent of the men who had answered his first letter. His inquiry letter had completely failed of its purpose. It was not selective, it was general.

Do not deceive. Nothing is gained by deception in a high grade venture. Your offer to give away a first-class lot in a first-class suburban real estate campaign will make a good class

of readers suspicious of you. And though you may get many inquiries from those who are looking for something for nothing, the chances are that the inquiries will be of a very poor quality. Better get two per cent of first-class prospects than ten per cent that will only waste your time. You must not forget that it costs money to solicit people either by mail or by salesmen.

Heading and first sentence introduce a subject of vital interest to publishers.

Facts and arguments which show that the writer knows conditions.

As he has had such wide experience he understands the situation and his words carry conviction—touch a tender spot with every publisher

HOW TO INCREASE YOUR ADVERTISING RECEIPTS

What would it be worth to you to have a dozen more local advertisers buying your space regularly?

How much money would it mean to have in the paper regularly just a few of those who advertise poorly and spasmodically for a short time, then drop out and whine that "advertising doesn't pay?"

I know your problems. I have had soliciting experience as well as broad copywriting experience. I served three years on the advertising staff of THE BALTIMORE NEWS--the paper for which Mr. Munsey recently paid $1,500,000. I know how hard it is to get a certain class of local advertisers started. I know how hard it is to keep them going after they once start. Of course YOU know why some advertisers come in the paper but won't stay. They can't see where their money comes back, AND THE PLAIN TRUTH IS THAT OFTEN IT DOESN'T COME BACK simply because these advertisers don't advertise intelligently.

Your solicitors are not all skillful copywriters. Soliciting ability and copy-writing ability rarely go together. Even if your solicitors were all good copy-writers, they wouldn't have time to study each advertiser's proposition exhaustively.

But if you expect to keep your advertising receipts up to the high-water mark, you can't always do ALL SOLICITING and NO HELPING. You must assist the advertiser to get the full value

of the money he spends with you. How? This letter answers the question.

Clear and logical.

Read the attached SECRETS OF SUCCESSFUL ADVERTISING. They are short, but they are interesting and they are practical. Note the plain examples of the good and the bad. These talks will encourage advertisers to begin and will help those who come in to get the worth of their money. If you sent all of your customers and prospective customers a book on Advertising--even if a suitable one were available--it might insult some. Perhaps only a few would read it thoroughly. Besides, it would probably cost you a hundred dollars.

These short talks can be used on days when you are not pushed for space. You can see that they look readable. They can be read in a minute or two. The cost is insignificant, considering the results that are sure to come from this campaign of education. Suppose only two or three new patrons came in as the result; you would get back your little investment over and over. Who will educate your customers and prospective customers if you don't?

An effective, confident close that commands respect and consideration.

I do not urge you. Just read the articles. I know what you, as a progressive publisher, will think of them. Let me hear from you as soon as convenient, for if you do not want the service, I shall want to offer it elsewhere. You are the only publisher in your city to whom I am now offering the service. I enclose stamp for the return of the sheets in the event that you do not keep them.

Yours for more and better advertising,

W. B. Andrews.

The question of how to open your inquiry letter is a big one. Good beginnings are as varied as the proposition which the letter presents.

The straight question usually commands attention. "Do you get the best price for your goods?" "Are you securing all the advertising patronage to which you are entitled?" "Couldn't you use an extra pair of good trousers?" "Do you collect

98 per cent of your accounts?" Openings of this kind rivet attention.

With some letter-writers, the direct command style of opening is popular: "Get more advertising. How? This letter answers

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Gentlemen:

Your easiest profits are those you make by saving expense.

There is one way you can save rent; save wages; save damage to samples and still sell more goods.

Install a Patent Extension Display Rack in any department you like--picture, linen, notions, sporting goods, etc., and you will add 30 square feet of display for every foot you use. You will enable one salesman to do the work of two. You will save the time your salesmen now spend in getting out goods and putting them away. You will prevent the samples from becoming soiled.

Don't take the trouble to write us a letter, just pencil on the foot of this the name of the manager of the department you would like to begin with, and we will explain all about these display racks to him.

Yours very truly,

Smith and Dice

P. S. Marshall Field & Co., of Chicago, bought the first Extension Display Rack we sold and they have been buying ever since. Their last order just received amounts to nearly a thousand dollars. Can you afford not to investigate?

The reference to easy profits at once interests every business man and the method of saving rent, saving wages and increasing sales is certain to be investigated. The third paragraph presents good argument—short and to the point. The letter is extremely easy to answer—just a few words with a pencil and that is all. Proof of the merit of the article in its satisfactory use by a large wholesale house is cleverly brought out in the postscript

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the question." "Wear tailor-made clothes at the price of ready-made." "Make your money earn you six per cent." If these openings are chosen with the care that the advertising man uses in selecting headings for advertisements, attention will be secured.

Another good way to win the interest of the prospect is to offer to help him in his buying in some specific way. A firm selling diamonds by mail, for instance, does it in this fashion:

"Unless you are an experienced judge of precious stones, it is almost impossible to buy a diamond at random and be certain of getting value for your money. But you need not take chances. Our best expert has written a booklet telling just how to determine diamond value, how to detect flaws, and explaining the choicest cuttings. Whether or not you buy of us, this little book will be of inestimable value to you in buying stones. We will be glad to send you a copy for the asking."

Still other writers follow the declarative form of opening. "Allison Preferred has advanced to 106 in a week." "Yesterday we sold for $10,000 cash a property that was put in our hands only Tuesday." But inasmuch as the declarative form lacks a little of the inherent interest of the question or the command, it should deal with some point of particular "interest value" to the class addressed.

Style and interest value are just as important in the letter that is to draw an inquiry as in the letter designed to make a sale. Some think that just because a letter is fairly certain to reach a man if properly addressed, it is easy to get a reply. Far from it. Unless there is a good reason for a man answering a letter, he isn't going to do it.

Suppose that a furniture dealer, on receiving a new stock of furniture, writes a letter like this to a list of several hundred women:

"Our fall stock of furniture arrived on Saturday and is now on exhibition on our third floor. The showing is unsurpassed. Here you will find something to suit you, whether you wish oak, mahogany, walnut or birch. We invite you to pay us a call."

Some who would probably have come anyway may come in response to such a letter or may write for special information. But a letter of this kind is sure to bring results:

Dear Mrs. Brown:

I remember that when you purchased the mahogany bed last March you expressed a desire to buy a dresser that would match. In the new lot of furniture that we put on our floors only yesterday are several dressers that would match your piece perfectly. Come in and see them. I should like you to see also the dressing tables and chairs that match your dresser, even if you are not ready just now to get an entire set.

The first letter has little point to it. The second has personality and interest, and if signed by the salesman that sold the first piece of mahogany, is certain to bring the customer in if anything would.

A strong method of closing letters of this sort is to have final paragraphs of this style: "May we tell you more? This won't put you under the least obligation. If we can't show you that it is to your interest to take up this matter, it is our fault—not yours. Mail the card now and let us put all the facts before you."

A post card or a postal card should be enclosed in all inquiry-bringing letters. The request for further details should be printed, so that the prospect has only to sign his name and mail the card. In other words, make it easy for the prospect to answer. Another thing, don't print anything on the card that will make it appear that the prospect is committing himself. Paragraphs of this sort have proved effective: "Without committing myself, I give you permission to furnish me full information about the subject mentioned in your letter."

The card method is particularly good if the inquiry is to be followed up by a solicitor, for the card may be sent conveniently to the solicitor who will take it with him when he calls. It sometimes pays to have all the inquiries from a territory sent on cards addressed to a certain solicitor, though the inquirer may think at the time of inquiring that the one whose name appears on the card merely is the correspondent that wrote the letter. The advantage is that a prospect who sends in a card addressed to "Mr. H. E. Carrington, care of the Smith Publishing Company," has seen Mr. Carrington's name. When Mr. Carrington calls, the inquirer is sometimes flattered to think that the gentleman has been sent from the home office. As he has written a card to Mr. Carrington, he cannot with good grace deny an interview.

The man who writes and offers to do something without putting the least obligation on the inquirer who accepts the offer is hard to turn down. A writer of advertisements, after a courteous criticism on advertisements that he doesn't like, closes in this way: "I think I can show that it is to your interest to use some copy of my construction. If I can't, certainly it won't be your fault. May I show you what I think is a more profitable way of advertising these goods? If when you see my copy you are not more than satisfied to pay my bill, there won't be any ill-feeling on my part. The decision will rest with you."

THE INQUIRY BRINGING LETTER

WHAT IT MUST DO	WHAT IT MUST NOT DO
STIMULATE INTEREST	AROUSE IDLE CURIOSITY
AWAKE DESIRE FOR FURTHER INFORMATION	CREATE EXAGGERATED IDEAS
GIVE REASON FOR ANSWERING	GIVE FULL PARTICULARS
MAKE INDUCEMENT FOR ANSWERING	MISREPRESENT PROPOSITION
PAVE WAY FOR FOLLOW UP	WASTE ARGUMENTS
CALL FOR IMMEDIATE ACTION	CLOSE WAY FOR FURTHER LETTERS

A townsite company, selling town lots by mail, uses a device that gets replies when ordinary requests would be disregarded. As the close of a three-page form letter this paragraph is used:

"We enclose letter that the railway company wrote us. Please return it in the enclosed stamped envelope, and tell us what you think of our plan."

The next sheet following is a facsimile letter from a prominent railway official commending the plan, so mak-

ing it easy for the prospect to add a few words of commendation.

This is a clever scheme to coax a reply out of the prospect—and it is certain that he carefully reads the letter from the railroad company before he returns it. No matter what the nature of his letter it gives an opportunity for a personal reply.

A clothing manufacturer has an effective method of drawing out a fresh inquiry or indication of interest from his mailing list by inquiring what satisfaction the reader got out of the last suit ordered, asking a criticism of service if the buyer has any to make, saying that anything that was wrong will be made right.

Writers of investment letters have found that it pays to emphasize the fact that only a small lot of stock is available. If the letter leads the prospect to believe that barrels of the stock will be sold, the effect will be prejudicial. The "limited quantity" idea is effective in selling other things.

An investment letter that brought good results where the signer of the letter knew all those to whom the letter was sent made the statement that four or five shares of stock had been put aside for the prospect. Practically no more information was given in the letter, but full information was offered on receipt of request. The request gave opportunity for the salesman to call. This "putting aside" idea may be applied to clothing and other commodities. Its efficiency lies in the fact that it gives a definite point to the letter.

In the letter that angles for an inquiry, do not tell too much. Whet the appetite and arouse the curiosity. Make them hungry to learn all about it, make them come back like Oliver Twist and ask for more. But it is fatal to paint a proposition in such brilliant colors that there is a chance for disappointment when the prospect gets his additional information. Nor should an offer of a free booklet or free samples be made so alluring that the letter will be answered out of idle curiosity when the recipient is really not a prospect at all.

Schemes without number can be devised to get a reply and only enough should be put in such a letter to stimulate a reply, saving up the real arguments and the big talking points for the letter that aims on getting the actual order.

How To *Close* Sales By LETTER

SUPPOSE that your most obstinate „prospect" —a man in the next block on whom your cleverest salesman had used every tactic and had been rewarded only by polite turn-downs until he had lost hope—should call up some afternoon and ask you to send over a salesman. Would you despatch the office boy? Or would you send your star salesman? Yet if that prospect lived a hundred miles away and sent in a letter of inquiry, one out of two firms would entrust the reply to a second or third-rate correspondent—entirely forgetful that an inquiry is merely a clue to a sale, and not a result in itself. This chapter shows how to GET THE ORDER *by letter*

THE man who inquires about your goods isn't "sold" by a long ways. He is simply giving you an opportunity to sell him. Inquiries aren't *results*, they're simply *clues* to possible sales, and if you are going to follow those clues up and make sales out of them, you need the best men you can find and the best letters those men can turn out to do it. Inquiries of good quality are costly, frequently several times as costly as the advertiser figures in advance that he can afford to pay. Yet, strange to say, many advertisers will employ $50 or $100-a-week ability to write advertisements that will produce inquiries and then expect $10 or $15 men to turn them into sales. As a matter of fact nine times out of ten the hardest part of the transaction is to close the sale.

An inquiry is merely an expression of interest. The reader of the advertisement says, in effect, "All right, I'm impressed. Go ahead and show me." Or, if he hasn't written in reply to an advertisement, he sends an inquiry and invites the manufacturer or dealer to tell what he has. To get the highest possible proportion of sales from each hundred inquiries, requires that the correspondent be as skillful in his written salesmanship as the successful man behind the counter is with his oral canvass and his showing of the goods.

If the truth were known, it is lack of appreciation of this point that discourages most concerns trying to sell by mail, and it is the real secret of a large percentage of failures.

A clock manufacturer notified the advertising manager of one of the big magazines that he had decided to discontinue his advertising. "The inquiries we get from your magazine," he wrote, "don't pan out." The advertising manager thought he saw the reason why and he made a trip down to the factory to investigate. Reports showed that in two months his magazine had pulled over 400 inquiries, yet out of that number just seven prospects had been sold.

"Will you let me see your follow-up letters?" he asked. They were brought out, and the advertising manager almost wept when he read them. Awkward, hackneyed, blundering notes of acknowledgment, they lacked even the merest suggestion of salesmanship. They would kill rather than nourish the interest of the average prospect. He sent the set of letters up to the service bureau of his magazine and a new series of strong convincing letters, such as the clock deserved, were prepared.

On the strength of these he got the advertiser back in and the next month out of 189 inquiries, forty-six clocks were sold. Think of the actual loss that manufacturer suffered simply because he did not really appreciate that inquiries aren't sales!

Get this firmly in mind and then get the proper attitude toward the inquirer. There is a big difference between the original sales letter and the answer to the inquiry. You haven't got to win his interest now. You've got that. But you have got to hold it and develop it to the buying point. Your man has asked you something; has given you the chance to state your case. Now state it in the most complete, convincing way you know how.

A good way to get at this is to put yourself once more in the other man's place. What do *you* like to get when *you* answer

Dear Sir:

We are pleased to receive your request for "Wilson's Accounting Methods," and a copy goes forward by today's mail. Do not fail to notify us if it fails to reach you within a day of the receipt of this letter.

Your attention is particularly called to the descriptive matter on pages 3 to 9, inclusive. We are confident that among the forty stock record forms there illustrated and described you will find a number that will save time and labor in your office. You will see that our stock forms are carried in two sizes--3 by 6½ inches and 5 by 8 inches, the smaller size being furnished at $2 a thousand and the larger size at $2.50 a thousand, assorted as you desire.

Should you desire special forms to meet your individual requirements, we can furnish them to order, printed from your copy, on one side of linen-bond stock--your choice of five colors --at $3.50 a thousand.

On pages 116 to 139 you will find complete descriptions and order blanks of our special introductory outfits, ranging in price from $1 to $22.

We make these attractive offers to enable our customers to select outfits that can be installed at a very small cost, and we ship any of our stock outfits with the distinct understanding that if they are not entirely satisfactory they may be returned to us at our expense.

Under the liberal conditions we make, you incur no risk in placing an order, and we trust that we may be favored with one from you right away. By purchasing direct from us--the manufacturers--you eliminate all middleman's profits and are sure to get proper service.

Let us hear from you.

Very truly yours,

Anderson & Anderson

A letter that sums up well the principal features of the goods described in detail in the catalogue and the strong points of the manufacturer's plan of selling. The letter is closely linked with the catalogue. Such a letter as this is a strong support to the catalogue

an advertisement? And how do you like to get it? First of all you like a prompt answer.

"I have had some experiences lately," says one business man, "that have made me feel that promptness and careful attention to all of a correspondent's requests are fully as important as the literary part of business correspondence. I am interested in an enterprise in which material of various kinds will be used—sample jars, mailing cases, and so forth. I have been writing to manufacturers in the effort to get samples and prices.

"In several cases it really seemed to me as if the manufacturer was trying to test my patience by waiting from three days to a week before answering my letter. Several of them forgot to send the samples they referred to in their letters. In other cases the matter of samples was overlooked for a few days after the letter was written or the samples were ordered forwarded from a distant factory without any explanation to me that the samples would be a few days late in arriving. In still other instances references were made to prices and sizes that were not clear, thus necessitating another letter and a further delay of a week or ten days.

"As I had to have all the material before I could proceed with any of it, one man's delay tied up the whole job.

"Really when one has a chance to see the dowdy, indifferent way in which a great many business concerns take care of inquiries and prospective customers, the wonder is that there are so many successes and not more failures.

"How refreshing it is to get a reply by return mail from an enterprising man who is careful to label every sample and to give you all the necessary information in complete form and to write in such a way as to make you feel you are going to get prompt, careful service if your order is placed with him. It is a pleasure to send business his way, and we do it, too, whenever we can."

It is easy enough to look out for these things when a regular method is adopted. With a catalogue before him, the correspondent should dictate a memorandum, showing what samples or enclosures are to be sent and how each is to be marked. By referring to the memorandum, as he dictates, the references will be clear.

Cherish both carefulness and promptness. You don't know what you sometimes lose by being a day late. An inquirer

often writes to several different concerns. Some other correspondent replies by return mail, and the order may be closed before your belated letter gets in its work, particularly if the inquirer is in a hurry—as inquirers sometimes are. You may never learn why you lost the order.

When you cannot give full attention to the request immediately, at least write the inquirer and tell how you will reply fully in a day or so or whenever you can. If you can truthfully say so, tell him that you have just what he wants and ask him to wait to get your full information before placing his order. In this way you may hold the matter open.

Dear Sir:

Replying to your esteemed favor of recent date would say that we have noted your request for a sample of Royal Mixture and that same has been forwarded.

This tobacco is absolutely without question the finest smoking tobacco on the market today. This statement will be substantiated by tens of thousands of smokers.

We hope to receive your valued order at an early date and remain

Truly yours,

Brown & Co.

The first paragraph of this letter is so hackneyed that it takes away all personality, and there is nothing in the second paragraph to build up a picture in the reader's mind of an enjoyable tobacco.

Now as to the style and contents of your letter, here's one thing that goes a long way. Be cheerful. Start your letter by acknowledging his inquiry as though you were glad to get it. "Yours of the 15th received and contents noted," doesn't mean anything. But how about this: "I was glad to find on my desk this morning your letter of the 15th inquiring about the new model Marlin." There's a personal touch and good will in that. A correspondence school answers a prospective student's inquiry like this: "I really believe that your letter of the 6th, which came to me this morning, will prove to be the most important letter that you ever wrote." An opening such as this

clinches the man's interest again and carries him straight through to the end. Don't miss an opportunity to score on the start.

Dear Sir:

Your order for a sample pouch of Royal Mixture is greatly appreciated. The tobacco was mailed to-day.

To appreciate the difference between Royal Mixture and the "others," just put a little of it on a sheet of white paper by the side of a pinch from a package of any other smoking tobacco manufactured. You won't need a microscope to see the difference in quality. Smoke a pipeful and you will quickly notice how different in mellowness, richness and natural flavor Royal Mixture is from the store-bought kind.

If you are not enthusiastic over its excellence I shall feel greatly disappointed. So many discriminating pipe smokers in all sections are praising it that it makes me believe that in "The Aristocrat of Smoking Tobacco" I have produced an article that is in fact the best tobacco money can buy.

Royal Mixture is all pure tobacco, and the cleanest, best-cured and finest leaf that the famous Piedmont section of North Carolina can produce. The quality is there, and will be kept as long as it is offered for sale. Depend upon that.

The more you smoke Royal Mixture the better you'll like it. This is not true of the fancy-named mixtures which owe their short-lived popularity to pretty labels, fancy tin boxes and doctored flavors. I give you quality in the tobacco instead of making you pay for a gold label and tin box.

The only way to get it is by ordering from me. Royal Mixture goes right from factory to your pipe--you get it direct, and know you are getting it just right, moist and fresh.

Right now, TO-DAY, is the time to order. A supply of Royal Mixture costs so little and means so much in pipe satisfaction that every hour of delay is a loss to you. It's too good to do without. Money refunded promptly if you are not satisfied.

If it is not asking too much of you, I would like to hear within a day or two just how the tobacco suits you. Will you not write me about it? Be critical, as I desire your candid opinion.

Respectfully yours,

Wallace E. Lee

The letter is here re-written, making it interesting from the first line to the last. It makes one feel that Royal Mixture is something unusually good

Second, be sure you *answer* the inquiry—every point in it. You know how provoked you are when you ask a question and the correspondent in replying fails to answer. Be sure you answer all the questions of the inquiries you handle. Give letters a final reading, to be sure. It is often advisable to quote the inquirer's questions or to use side-heads so he will understand you refer to the questions he asked.

For example, suppose a real estate agent receives an inquiry about a farm. The inquiry can be clearly answered by adopting a style like this:

We are very glad to give you details about the Abbott farm in Prescott County.

LOCATION.--This farm is on the macadam road between Frederick and Whittsville, three miles from Frederick. There is a flag station on the D. & L. railroad one and a quarter miles from the farm gate on the macadam road.

TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES.--There are six trains a day on the D. & L. road that will stop at the flag station mentioned. These trains give a four-hour service to Baltimore.

This style of letter is a great aid to the writer in bringing related points together and thus strengthening description and argument.

If the inquiry involves the sending of a catalogue, hook the letter and the enclosure together by specific references. It adds immensely to the completeness of your letter. And don't be afraid to repeat. No matter what is in the catalogue or booklet that is sent along with the letter, the letter should review concisely some of the most important points. The average person will pay closer attention to what is said in the letter than to what appears in the catalogue. The letter looks more personal. For example:

On page 18 you will see described more fully the cedar chest that we advertise in the magazines. Pages 20 to 28 describe higher-priced chests. All these chests are of perfect workmanship and have the handsome dull egg-shell finish. The higher-priced models have the copper bands and the big-headed nails. Use the order blank that appears on page 32 of the catalogue, and be sure to read the directions for ordering that appear on page 30.

These descriptions and references tie the letters strongly to the enclosures and thus unify the entire canvass.

The woman who gets a letter telling her that the refrigerator she inquired about is described and illustrated on page 40 of the catalogue sent under separate cover, and then reads some quoted expressions from people in her town or state who have bought these refrigerators, is more likely to order than if a letter is sent, telling her merely that the catalogue has been mailed under separate cover; that it gives a complete description but that any special information will be given on request. The first method of replying makes it appear that the correspondent is enthusiastic about his refrigerators and really wants to sell the inquirer one. The second method is cold and indifferent. If your goods permit the sending of samples by all means enclose some with the letter. They permit the actual handling of the article, which is so great an advantage in selling over the counter. And then insure attention. No man, for example, will throw away a haberdasher's letter referring to spring shirts if samples are enclosed. The samples will get some attention, though the one who received them may not need shirts at the time.

Samples also give an opportunity to emphasize value. For instance, it is a good plan to say: "Take these samples of outings to your local store and see if you can get anything at $25 that is half as good as what we are offering you." The fact is, few people make such comparisons, but the invitation to compare is evidence of the advertiser's confidence. For that matter, few people ask for refund of money on honest merchandise, provided the refund is limited to a brief period; but the promise of instant refund when unsatisfactory goods are returned, is a great confidence-creator.

It is not always possible for one correspondent to handle the entire inquiry. In that case it is well to let the answer indicate the care exercised in preparing it.

A part of a letter may sometimes advantageously refer to some other correspondent who can deal more thoroughly with a technical matter under discussion. A large mail-order concern employs a man who can tell customers in a tactful way just how to make coffee and tea, and he makes satisfied customers out of many who otherwise would believe that they had received inferior goods. This same man is also an expert in adjusting by letter any troubles that may arise over the company's premium clocks, and so forth.

Unless such technical matters are extensive enough to require a separate letter, they can be introduced into other communications by merely saying:

"On reading what you have written about the engine, our expert has this to say:"

Then again, make your letter *clear*. Good descriptions are just as important in answers to inquiries as in letters that have the task of both developing interest and closing a sale. All that has been said in previous chapters as to the value of graphic descrip-

Dear Sir:

Your esteemed inquiry has been received, and we are sending you one of our booklets.

In case none of the samples suit you, let us know what colors you like and we will send more samples.

We can save you money on trousers. A great many of the best dressers of New York and Chicago are wearing trousers made by us.

You run no risk in ordering, for if the trousers are not as I represent them or do not fit you, we will correct the mistake or refund your money.

We urge you to order immediately, as we may not have in stock the patterns you prefer.

Trusting to receive your order at an early date,

Truly yours,

Edward Brown

This letter starts out with a hackneyed opening and not enough emphasis is put on the samples. It is a mistake to make the suggestion that the samples sent may be unsuitable. The third paragraph starts out with an assertion unbacked by proof and the second sentence is a silly boast that no one believes. A man does not pay his tailor the full price until the trousers are completed. It is a weak selling plan to try to persuade a stranger to send the entire price to an advertiser whom he knows nothing about. The plea for an immediate order on the ground that the pattern may not be in stock later is a weak and unfortunate method of argument. The final paragraph is as hackneyed as the first, and fails to impress the reader

Dear Sir:

Here you are! This mail will bring you a sample book containing some of the neatest trousers patterns you have seen in a long time. Tear off a strand from any of them and hold a match to it; if it doesn't "burn wool" the laugh is on me.

You may wonder why I can undersell your local dealer and yet turn out trousers that "make good." Certain conditions, of which I shall tell you, make this possible.

In the first place, trousers are my specialty. Other tailors want suit orders above all, but I have built up my business by specializing on trousers alone.

I buy my fabrics from the manufacturers in large quantities at wholesale prices. The saving--the money that represents your retailer's profit--comes to you.

I don't need an uptown "diamond-front" store, with an exorbitant rental. Instead, I employ the best tailors I can find.

The trousers I make are built, not shaped, to fit you. We don't press them into shape with a "goose," either. All our fabrics are shrunk before we cut them at all. Sewn throughout with silk, the seams will not rip or give. And style--why, you will be surprised to see that trousers could have so much individuality.

I could not afford to sell just one pair of trousers to each man at these prices. It costs me something to reach you --to get your first order. You will order your second pair just as naturally as you would call for your favorite cigar.

I am enclosing three samples of $6 London woolens. These have just come in--too late to place in the sample book. Aren't they beauties?

Please don't forget that I guarantee to please you or to return your money cheerfully. I ask for the $1 with order only to protect myself against triflers.

May I look for an early order?

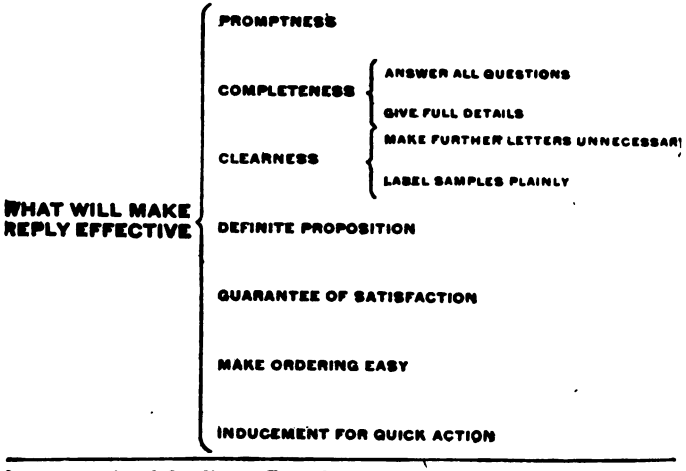
Yours, for high-grade trousers,

Chas R Grieme

An interesting beginning, inviting proof of quality. Facts show why low prices can be quoted, followed by graphic description and logical argument. The samples give point to the letter and the plain, fair selling plan makes an effective ending.

tions and methods of writing them applies with full force to this chapter. The letter that is a reply to an inquiry can properly give more detailed and specialized description than a letter that is not a reply to an inquiry, for in writing to one who has inquired the correspondent knows that the reader of the letter is interested and will give attention to details if they are given clearly and attractively. Generally speaking, a sales letter that is in response to an inquiry should make it unnecessary for the reader to ask a second time for information before reaching a decision.

And this leads to one big important point: do your best to close the sale in this first reply. Don't leave loop holes and uncertainties that encourage further correspondence. Give your



letter an air of finality. Lay down a definite buying proposition and then make it easy for your man to accept it.

Guarantees, definite proposals, suggestions to use "the enclosed order blank," are important factors in effective closing paragraphs. Don't put too much stress on the fact that you want to give more information. Many correspondents actually encourage the inquirer to write again and ask for more information before ordering. Try to get the order—not a lot of new questions.

Experiments show that the interest of an inquirer wanes rapidly after the receipt of the first response. In replying to

inquiries, the chance of securing a sale with a third letter is much less than the chance with the first, for after receiving the first letter, if it is unconvincing, the inquirer is likely to come to an adverse decision that cannot afterwards be easily changed. In this respect, answers to inquirers are much like unsolicited letters sent out to non-inquirers and planned to create and build up interest. In a number of lines of business the third letter sent out in response to an inquiry barely pays for itself. For this reason, it is usually poor policy in handling this class of business to withhold some strong argument from the first letter in order to save it for the second or the third. Better fire the 13-inch gun as soon as you have the range.

If the first answer fails to land the order, the advertiser may follow up with an easier plan of payment, a smaller lot of the goods, or make some other such inducement. Not all goods admit of offering small lots, but when this can be done, the argument may be made that there is no profit in such small orders, that the offer is only made to convince the inquirer of quality.

Some very successful correspondents close in the direct-command style: "Don't delay; send your order NOW." "Sit right down and let us have your order before you forget it." "It isn't necessary to write a letter; just write across the face of this letter 'I accept this trial offer', sign your name and send the sheet back to us in the enclosed envelope." Such closing sentences are strong, because the reader is influenced to act immediately, and the loss that usually comes about by reason of people putting things off and forgetting is reduced. The third example is particularly good because it eliminates letter-writing, which is a task to many and something that is often put off until the matter is forgotten.

Other correspondents, instead of using the direct command style, close in this way: "We are having a big sale on these porch chairs. If you order immediately we can supply you, but we cannot promise to do so if you wait." "We know that if you place your order you will be more than well pleased with your investment."

If prices are to be increased on the goods offered, the correspondent has a first-class opportunity to urge an immediate response: "There is just two weeks' time in which you can buy this machine at $25. So you can save $5 by acting *immediately*."

Experience shows that the increased-price argument is a good closer.

In the final sentences of the letter should be mentioned the premium or the discount that is given when the order is received before a certain date. These offers are effective closers in many cases. In making them it is well to say "provided your order is placed *in the mails* not later than the 10th," for such a date puts all on the same footing no matter how distant they are from the advertiser.

Finally, don't overlook the opportunity to make even the signature to your letter contribute something.

Firm signatures are rather lacking in personality. "Smith & Brown Clock Co." hasn't much "pull" to it. But when the pen-written name of Albert E. Brown appears under this signature the letter has much more of the personal appeal. For this reason, many concerns follow the practice of having some one put a personal signature under the firm name. It is not desirable, of course, to have mail come addressed to individuals connected with the firm, but this can be avoided by having return envelopes, addressed to the firm, in every letter. In fact, a little slip may be enclosed reading: "No matter to whom you address an order or letter always address the envelope to the firm. This insures prompt attention."

At least one large clothing concern has found it profitable to let its letters go out over such signatures as "Alice Farrar, for BROWN & CO." Those to whom Miss Farrar writes are informed that the inquiry has been turned over to her for personal attention—that she attends to all requests from that inquirer's section and will do her best to please, and so on.

When methods of this kind are followed and it becomes necessary—because of the absence of the correspondent addressed—for some one else to answer a letter, it is well to say. "In the absence of Miss Farrar, I am answering your letter." Never let an inquirer feel that the one he addresses is too busy to attend to his wants or is not interested enough to reply. When the busiest president of a business concern turns over to some one else a letter intended for the president's personal reading, the correspondent should say, "President Parkins, after reading your letter, requests me to say for him," and so on.

These little touches of personality and courtesy are never lost. They create a cumulative business asset of enormous value.

What to ENCLOSE With *Sales* Letters

SALES have been made—and lost—by the printed matter enclosed with business correspondence. A mere mass of folders, cards and bric-a-brac is in itself not impressive to the "prospect," unless each item backs up a statement in the letter *and has a direct bearing on the sale.*

Enclosures may be classified thus: FIRST, catalogues, price lists and detailed descriptive matter —to inform the prospect of the goods; SECOND, testimonials and guarantees—to prove the claims made for the goods; THIRD, return postals, addressed envelopes and order blanks—to make it easy for the prospect to buy the goods

THE enclosure is to the letter WHAT the supporting army is to the line of attack. It stands just behind the men at the front, ready to strengthen a point here, reinforce the line there, overwhelm opposition finally with strength and numbers.

A clever sales letter may make the proper impression, it may have all the elements necessary to close the sale, but it is asking too much to expect it to handle the whole situation alone.

The average prospect wants more than he finds in a letter before he will lay down his money. The very fact that a letter comes alone may arouse his suspicions. But if he finds it backed up by accompanying enclosures that take things up where the letter leaves off, answer his mental inquiries and pile up proof, the proposition is more certain to receive consideration.

The whole principle of right use of enclosures is a matter of foreseeing what your man will want to know about your proposition and then giving it to him in clear convincing form and liberal measure. But enclosures must be as carefully planned as the letter itself. They are calculated to play a definite part, accomplish a definite end and the study of their effect is just as vital as the study of step-by-step progress of letter salesmanship.

Some letter writers seem to think that the only essential in enclosures is numbers and they stuff the envelope full of miscellaneous folders, booklets and other printed matter that does little more than bewilder the man who gets it. Others make the mistake of not putting anything in with the letter to help the prospect buy. Neither mistake is excusable, if the writer will only analyze his proposition and his prospect, consider what the man at the other end will want to know—then give him that—and more.

And in order to live up to this cardinal rule of enclosures, simply confine your letter to *one* article. Seven of the best letter writers in the country have made exhaustive tests with descriptive folders. They have found that *one* descriptive circular, with *one* point, and *one* idea pulls where the multiplicity of enclosures simply bewilders and prejudices the reader. These men have conclusively proved that overloaded envelopes do not bring results.

In general the enclosure has three purposes: first, to give the prospect a more complete and detailed description of your goods; second to give him proof in plenty of their value; third, to make it easy for him to buy. On this basis let us classify the kinds of enclosures; tha the mediums through which these three purposes may be accomplished.

The first, the detailed description, is usually given in catalogue, booklet or circular, complete in its explanation and, if possible, illustrated. Supplementing the catalogue or booklet, samples should be used whenever practicable for they help more than anything else can to visualize the goods in the prospect's eyes.

Proof is best supplied in two ways, through testimonials and guarantees; and the ways of preparing these for the prospect are endless in variety.

Third, you will make it easy to order through the use of order blanks, return cards, addressed envelopes, myriads of schemes that tempt the pen to the dotted line.

The exact form of each of these elements is not of moment here so long as it is clear to the man who receives it. The point to be made is that one enclosure representing each of these elements—description, proof, and easy ordering—should accompany the sales letter to back it up and make its attack effective.

And now to take these up one by one and see the part each plays.

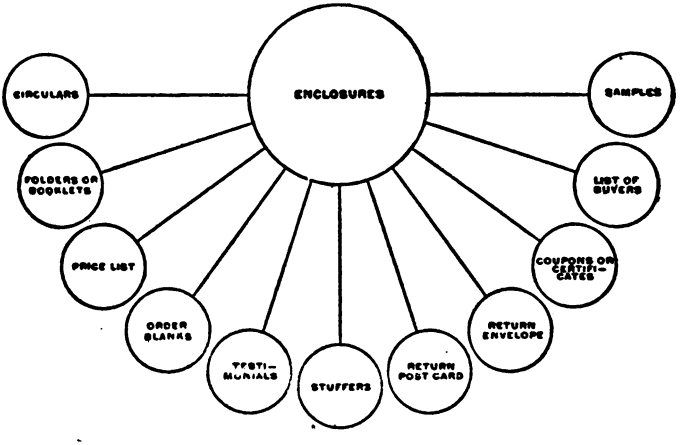
When the prospect reads your letter, if it wins his interest, his first thought is "Well, this sounds good, but I want to know more about it." And right there the circular comes to his assistance—and to yours. And on this circular depends very largely whether his interest is going to grow or die a natural death. If it is to lead him toward an order it must picture to him clearly just what your proposition is and at the same time it must contain enough salesmanship to carry on the efforts of the letter.

And it is well to bear down hard on this: do not put material into your letter that properly belongs in the circular. Link your letter up with the enclosure and lead the reader to it, but do not go into lengthy descriptions in the letter. Concentrate there on getting your man interested. Do that and you may depend on his devouring the enclosures to get the details. A common mistake in this line is to place a table of prices in the body of the letter. It is simply putting the cart before the horse. Price in every sale should be mentioned last. It certainly should not be mentioned *before* you have convinced your prospect that he wants your article. Prices should be quoted at the end of the descriptive folder or on a separate slip of paper.

This descriptive enclosure takes on many forms—a booklet, a circular, a folder, a simple sheet of specifications, a price list—but in all cases it is for the one purpose of reinforcing the argument made in the letter. When a proposition requires a booklet, the mistake is often made of making it so large and bulky that it cannot be enclosed with the letter. The booklet comes trailing along after the letter has been read and forgotten. Sometimes the booklet never arrives. Where possible it is much better to make the booklet of such a size that it may be enclosed in the same envelope with the letter. Then you catch the prospect when his interest is at the highest point. It is embarrassing and ineffective to refer to "our booklet, mailed to you under separate cover." Put the book with the letter. Or, if you must send the

booklet under separate cover, send it first and the letter later, so that each will arrive at about the same time.

And now that you have put in a circular to help the letter, put in something to help the circular—a sample. Here you have description visualized. In more ways than one the sample is by all odds the most valuable enclosure you can use. In reality, it does more—much more than help the circular with its description, it is concrete proof, in that it demonstrates your faith in the article and your readiness to let your prospect judge it on its merits. A two by three inch square of cloth, a bit of wood to show



the finish, any "chip off the block" itself speaks more eloquently than all the paper and ink your money can buy. How irresistible becomes a varnish maker's appeal when he encloses in his letters a small varnished piece of wood, on the back of which he has printed, "This maple panel has been finished with two coats of '61' Floor Varnish. Hit it with a hammer. Stamp on it. You may dent the wood, but you can't crack the varnish. This is *one* point where '61' varnish excels."

A manufacturer of a new composition for walls gives a more accurate idea of his product than could ever be learned from words and pictures by sending a small finished section of the board as it could be put on the wall.

A knitting mill approaches perfection in sampling when it encloses a bit of cardboard on which are mounted a dozen samples of underwear, with prices pasted to each and a tape measure attached to aid in ordering. A roofing concern has the idea when it sends little sections of its various roof coatings. And at least one carriage maker encloses samples of the materials that go into his tops and seat covers.

Most unique samples are enclosed and because of their very novelty create additional interest in a proposition. A real estate company selling Florida lands enclosed a little envelope of the soil taken from its property. To the farmer this little sample has an appeal that no amount of printed matter could equal.

A company manufacturing cement has called attention to its product by making small cement souvenirs such as paper weights, levels, pen trays, and so forth, sending them out in the same enclosure with the letter or in a separate package.

One manufacturer of business envelopes encloses with his letter his various grades of paper, made up into envelopes, each bearing the name of some representative concern that has used that particular grade. Then in the lower corner of the envelope is stamped the grade, weight, price and necessary points that must be mentioned in purchasing. The various envelopes are of different sizes. On the back of each envelope is a blank form in which the purchaser can designate the printed matter wanted, and underneath, in small letters, the directions, "Write in this form the printed matter you demand; pin your check to the envelope and mail to us."

Thus this one enclosure serves a number of purposes. First, it carries a testimonial of the strongest kind by bearing the names of prominent concerns that have used it; then, it is an actual sample of the goods; and lastly, it serves the purpose of an order blank.

Even a firm which sells a service instead of a product can effectively make use of the sample principle. One successful correspondence school encloses with each answer to an inquiry a miniature reproduction of the diploma that it gives its graduates. While the course itself is what the student buys, unquestionably the inspired desire to possess a diploma like the one enclosed plays its part in inducing him to enroll.

A New York trust company gets the same effect by sending the prospective investor a specimen bond complete to the coupons which show exactly how much each is worth on definite dates through several succeeding years. Here again the specimen bond is not actually the thing he buys but it is a facsimile and an excellent one in that it puts in concrete form an abstract article.

Possibly it is inadvisable to include a sample. Then a picture of the article accomplishes the purpose. A grocer who writes his customers whenever he has some new brand of food product, always includes in his letter a post card with a full tinted picture of the article. For instance, with a new brand of olives he encloses a picture of the bottled olives, tinted to exactly represent the actual bottle and its contents, and underneath he prints the terse statement "Delicious, Tempting, Nutricious." If his letter has not persuaded the housewife to try a bottle of the olives, the picture on the enclosure is apt to create the desire in her mind and lead to a purchase.

An automobile dealer who knows the value of showing the man he writes a detailed picture of the machine, includes an actual photograph. Even the reproduction of the photograph is insufficient to serve his purpose. The photograph is taken with the idea of showing graphically the strongest feature of the machine as a selling argument, and illustrating to the smallest detail the sales point in his letter. Then, with pen and ink, he marks a cross on various mechanical parts of engine, body or running gear, and refers to them in his letter.

To carry the photograph enclosure a step farther, one dealer of automobile trucks illustrates the idea of efficiency. He encloses with his letter a photograph of his truck fully loaded. In another photograph he shows the same truck climbing a heavy grade. Then in his letter he says, "Just see for yourself what this truck will do. Estimate the weight of the load and then figure how many horses it would take to handle an equal load on a similar grade."

In the sale of furniture, especially, is the actual photograph enclosed with the letter a convincing argument. Fine carriages, hearses, and other high-grade vehicles are forcibly illustrated by photographs, and no other enclosure or written description is equally effective.

After description and visualizing—through the medium of circular and sample—comes proof, and this you may demonstrate through any means that affords convincing evidence of worth. The two best are testimonials and guarantees, but the effectiveness of either depends largely on the form in which you present them. Testimonials are often dry and uninteresting in themselves, yet rightly played up to emphasize specific points of merit they are powerful in value. The impression of their genuineness is increased a hundredfold if they are reproduced exactly as they are received.

An eastern manufacturer has helped the prestige of his cedar chests tremendously with the testimonials he has received from buyers.

Letters from the wives of presidents, from prominent bankers and men in the public eye he has reproduced in miniature, and two or three of these are enclosed with every sales letter.

An office appliance firm with a wealth of good testimonials to draw on sends each prospect letters of endorsement from others in his particular line of business. A correspondence school strengthens its appeal by having a number of booklets of testimonials each containing letters from students in a certain section of the country. The inquirer thus gets a hundred or more letters from students near his own home, some of whom he may even know personally.

A variation of the testimonial enclosure is the list of satisfied users. Such a list always carries weight, especially if the firms or individuals named are prominent. A trunk manufacturer, who issues a "trunk insurance certificate" to each customer, reproduces a score or more of these made out to well known men and submits them as proof of his product's popularity.

Another effective form of enclosure is a list of buyers since a recent date. One large electrical apparatus concern follows up its customers every thirty days, each time enclosing a list of important sales made since the previous report.

Another plan is that of a firm manufacturing printing presses. In making up its lists of sales it prints in one column the number of "Wellington" presses the purchaser already had in use and the number of new ones he has ordered. The names of the great printing houses are so well known to the trade that it is

tremendously effective to read that Blank, previously operating ten Wellingtons, has just ordered three more.

Second only to the testimony of the man who buys is the guarantee of the seller. Mail-order houses are coming more and more to see the value of the "money-back" privilege. It is the one big factor that has put mail sales on a par with the deal across the counter. Time was when sellers by mail merely hinted at a guarantee somewhere in their letter or circular and trusted that the prospect would overlook it. But it is often the winner of orders now and concerns are emphasizing this faith in their own goods by issuing a guarantee in certificate form and using it as an enclosure.

A roofing concern forces its guarantee on the prospect's attention by giving it a legal aspect, printing in facsimile signatures of the president and other officials—and stamping the company's name. Across the face of this guarantee is printed in red ink, the word "Specimen." Along the lower margin is printed, "This is the kind of a real guarantee we give you with each purchase of one of our stoves." A mail-order clothing firm sends a duplicate tag on which their guarantee is printed. Across the tag of this sample guarantee is printed in red, "This guarantee comes tagged to your garment."

The prospect who finds proof like this backing up a letter is forced to feel the worth-whileness of your goods or your proposition, and he draws forth his money with no sense of fear that he is chancing loss.

The number and kind of enclosures you will put into your letter is entirely up to you. But before you allow a letter to go out, dig under the surface of each circular and see whether it really strengthens your case.

Apply this test; is the letter supported with amplified description, proof, materials for ordering? If it is, it is ready for the attack. You may find it best to put your description, your testimonials, your guarantee and your price list all in one circular. It is not a mistake to do so. But whether they are all in one enclosure or in separate pieces, they should be there. And in addition, put in your return card order blank or envelope or whatever will serve best to bring the order. When your letter with its aids is complete, consistent, equipped to get the order then, and only then, let it go into the mails.

Bringing In *New Business* By POST CARD

METHODS of soliciting trade by mail are not confined to the letter or printed circular. The postal regulations are sufficiently broad to allow a generous leeway in the size and shape of communications that may be sent by mail, and as a result, a new field of salesmanship has been opened by the postal card. Folders, return-postals and mailing cards have become part of the regular ammunition of the modern salesman, who has adapted them to his varied requirements in ways that bring his goods before the "prospect" with an emphasis that the letter often lacks—and sometimes at half the cost

THE result-getting business man is always asking the reason why. He demands that a method, especially a selling plan, be basically right; that it have a principle behind it and that it stand the microscope of analysis and the test of trial.

There are three reasons why the postal card is a business-getter.

Did you ever pause while writing a letter, sit back in your chair, and deplore the poverty of mere words? Did you ever wish you dared to put in a little picture just at that point to *show* your man what you were trying to say? Of course you have if you have ever written a letter. That is reason one.

Did you ever watch a busy man going through his morning's mail? Long letters he may read, short letters he is sure to glance

through, but a post card he is certain to read. It is easy to read, it is to a degree informal and it is brother to a call on the 'phone. That is reason two.

And the third reason is that no matter what the principles behind it, by actual test it brings the business.

While primarily the postal mailing card is intended to aid the letter in many ways it does what the letter can never do. It can carry a design or an illustration without the least suggestion of effrontery, which a letter can not do without losing dignity. It can venture into clever schemes to cinch the interest. It is the acme of simplicity as means to win an inquiry. And withal it does its work at less cost than the letters.

In general postal mailing cards may be classed as of three types:

1. THE DOUBLE OR RETURN POST CARD. This consists simply of two ordinary post cards attached for convenience in mailing, sometimes closed at the loose edges by stickers but usually left open. The one carries the inquiry-seeking message; the other is for the reply. It is already addressed for returning and contains on the opposite side a standardized reply form to be signed.

2. The two or three or four FOLDER MAILING CARD. This gives greater space and opportunity for cleverness of appeal through design. The third or fourth fold may or may not be prepared for use as a reply card. Instead of providing for the reply in this way, some of these folders hold a separate card by means of corner slots. In any case they fold to the size of the ordinary postal and are held by a stamp or sticker.

3. ILLUSTRATED PERSONAL LETTERS. These are in effect simply letters printed on heavier stock which fold into post card size. Their advantage lies in the opportunity for illustration and an outside design or catch phrase to win attention. In some cases they are even filled in exactly in the manner of a form letter.

Which of these forms is best suited to your uses is a matter which the nature of your proposition and your method of selling must determine. Whether you want to tell a long story or a short one, whether you want it to serve merely as a reminder or as your principal means of attack, these and other points must guide you. So to help you determine this, it is best to consider the post card here on the basis of its uses. There are four:

1. To get inquiries.

2. To *sell* goods; to complete the transaction and get the order just as a letter would.

3. To cooperate with the dealer in bringing trade to his store.

4. To cooperate with the salesman in his work on dealer or consumer.

Inquiries may be inspired in two ways—either by using a very brief double card or folder which tells just enough to prompt a desire for more information or by a post card "letter" series which works largely on the lines of letters enclosed in envelopes. In the first instance the card or folder resorts to direct pertinent queries or suggestions of help that impel the reader to seek more details.

An addressing machine manufacturer, for instance, sends his "prospects" a double folder with a return post card attached. This message is little more than suggestive:

"Do you know that there is one girl in your addressing room who can do the work of ten if you will let her? All she needs is a Regal to help her. Give her that and you can cut nine names from your pay roll today. Does that sound like good business? Then let us tell you all about it. Just mail the card attached. It puts you under not the slightest obligation. It simply enables us to show you how to save some of your good dollars."

Such a card is virtually an inquiry-seeking advertisement done into post card form to insure reaching the individual. And for this reason it may be well to carry a design or illustration just as an advertisement would. A life insurance company has made good use of a post card folder, building it up around its selling point of low cost. The outside bears a picture of a cigar and the striking attention-getter "At the cost of Your Daily Smoke——" the sentence is continued on the inside "—you can provide comfort for your family after you are gone, through a policy." Then follows enough sales talk to interest the prospect to the point of urging him to tear off and send the return card for full information.

Many propositions can be exploited in this way. In other instances a much more complete statement must be made to

elicit a reply. Here the illustrated personal letter comes into use. And it is significant that in a number of specific cases these letters in post card form have been far more productive of inquiries than ordinary letters on the same proposition. Their unique form, the accompanying illustrations, by their very contrast in method of approach, prompt a reading that the letter does not get.

Postal mailing cards may be used in two ways—either as a campaign in themselves or as steps in a follow-up series. They are especially good when your selling plan permits of goods being sent on approval or a free trial basis. Then you can say, "Simply drop the attached order card in the mail box and the goods will come to you by first express."

A publishing house has sold thousands of low priced books on this basis, using merely a double post card. One section carries to the prospect an appealing description of the book and emphasizes the liberality of the offer. The return card bears a picture of the book itself and a clearly worded order, running something like this, "I will look at this book if you will send it charges prepaid. If I like it, I am to remit $1.00 within five days. If not, I am to return it at your expense." There can be no misunderstanding here. The simplicity of the card scheme itself appeals to prospects and brings back a big percentage of orders.

A variation of the use of the postal as a direct sales medium is the employment of it to secure bank savings accounts.

A banking house in Chicago sent out folders to a large mailing list of property holders and renters in all parts of the city. As a special inducement to establishing savings accounts, this house offered each person, who returned an attached card, a small metal savings bank free, which could be kept in the home for the reception of dimes and nickels until filled—this small bank to be returned at intervals to the bank for the establishment of a permanent savings account. On the return card enclosed was a promise to send to the inquirer's home one of those small banks absolutely without cost to the receiver. Here the simplicity of the scheme and method of proposing it again brought large returns.

One manufacturer of dental cream sends out free samples upon request. The tube is wrapped in pasteboard, which proves to be a post card ready for signature and stamp—inviting

the recipient to suggest the names of friends to whom samples can be sent. Some concerns offer to send a free sample if names are sent in but this firm has achieved better results by sending the sample to all who ask and then diplomatically inviting them to reciprocate by furnishing the names of their friends.

Several large hotels have found valuable advertising in post cards that are distributed by their guests. These cards are left on the writing tables with an invitation to "mail one to some friend."

A St. Louis restaurant keeps a stack of post cards on the cashier's desk. They are printed in three colors and give views of the restaurant, emphasizing its cleanliness and excellent service. Every month hundreds of these are mailed out by pleased customers and as a result the restaurant has built up a very large patronage of visitors—people from out of the city who are only too glad to go to some place that has been recommended to them.

A most unusual use of post cards appeared in a St. Louis street car. A prominent bondseller had arranged an attractive street car placard, discussing briefly the subject of bonds for investment purposes. In one corner of this placard was a wire-stitched pad of post cards, one of which passengers were invited to pull off. The card was mailable to the bondseller, and requested a copy of his textbook for investors. The prospect who sent the card was of course put upon the follow-up list and solicited for business. Here, again, the uniqueness appeals to the public.

As a cooperator with a letter follow-up, the card or folder is effective, because it introduces variety into the series, sometimes furnishing just the touch or twist that wins the order.

In the follow-up series the double folder becomes especially adaptable, because of its simplicity. It usually refers to previous correspondence. For example, one suggests: "You evidently mislaid our recent letter. Since its message is of such vital interest to your business—" The remainder of the message is given up to driving home a few of the fundamental points brought out in the previous letters. Simple directions for filling out an attached return card are added.

One double post card, used as a cooperator with a follow-up, calls attention to a sample previously mailed, asking a

careful comparison of the grade of material and closes with a special inducement to replies in the form of a discount for five days.

Return cards, employing the absolute guarantee to insure confidence of fair dealing give clinching power.. Here is a sample:

Gentlemen:--Please send me a _____ case for trial. It is clearly understood in signing this order that the shipment comes to me all charges prepaid and with your guarantee that you will promptly cancel the order, in case I am in any way dissatisfied.

A space is left at the bottom of the card for the person ordering to sign name and address.

Again the post card serves a similar purpose as a cooperator with the salesman. Often between calls the house makes a special inducement to sales.

Here, either double post cards or folders give the advantage of simplicity; the return card offering a powerful incentive to immediate action on the part of the customer. The return card indicates to the house that the customer is interested and a salesman is called back to handle the order.

One manufacturer, through use of the folder and card, wins a clever advantage for his salesmen. An attractive folder, with numerous illustrations, gives a fairly complete description of the firm's product. Enclosed with the folder is a return card bearing the form reply, "Dear Sirs: I am interested in————. Please mail me a picture catalog of———." And a space is left with directions for filling in name and address of the person replying.

These cards when received are carefully filed and from them the salesmen gauge their calls on the prospects. Here the advantage to the salesman is obvious, since his personal call assumes the nature of a favor to the prospect.

From time to time, mailing folders or double post cards, are mailed between calls of the salesman, and serve to keep the proposition warm in the mind of the prospect.

Usually the postal or folder is a valuable aid in sending trade to the dealer. One manufacturer to stimulate business by

creating orders for his retailer, sent out an elaborate series of mailing cards to the retailer's customers. Enclosed with the folder were leaflets giving special features in the stock, which added value to the sales letter. Handsomely engraved cards guaranteeing the material were also enclosed as a suggestion that the customer call on the retailer and the retailer's private business card was inserted.

A western coffee dealer used mailing folders on lists of consumers supplied him by retailers. Attractive designs on the outside of the folder create interest and put the consumer's mind in a receptive condition for considering the sales arguments embodied in the personal letter feature of the folder.

A manufacturer of a contrivance for applying special paints builds an approach for the dealer's salesman with postal folders. The design on the outside of the folder indicates the simplicity with which the appliance may be operated. The sales letter inside gives minute directions for using the machine and calls attention to particular features by reference to the demonstration on the outside. As an entering wedge to orders, the letter offers a free trial and suggests that a salesman make a practical demonstration.

The manufacturer has his dealer sign every letter and the return card enclosed gives only the address of the dealer.

A varnish concern sent to a large mailing list a series of illustrated letters describing the use and advantage of its products. They appealed to the consumer and built up a trade for the local dealer. Each letter contained both a return post card, addressed to the local dealer and a small pamphlet showing various grades of the varnish. The result of this follow-up system was twenty-five per cent more replies than the same number of envelope letters.

One of the most successful campaigns ever conducted to introduce a new cigarette depended entirely upon postal letters. A series of five or six of these—well nigh masterpieces of sales talk—created the desire to try the product. Enclosed with each folder was a card bearing a picture of the distinctive box in which the cigarettes were sold, so that the prospect could recognize it in the dealer's store.

In another instance a book publisher created a demand for a new novel by mailing a series of single post cards bearing illus-

trations from the book. In this case the element of mystery was employed and the real purpose of the cards was not divulged until five or six had been sent and the book was ready to go on sale.

Whatever variety of card, folder or letter you choose to use, these features you should carefully observe: the style of writing and the design and mechanical make-up.

The effectiveness of the mailing folder must depend upon the combination—ideas of attractiveness, simplicity and careful use of the personal letter feature. It must command attention by a forceful, intelligent approach. It must stand out sharply against the monotonous sameness of the business letter.

The folder's appearance should be in accord with the class or type of men it goes to meet. Its approach should contain sincerity, purpose, and originality. Originality in shape hardly serves the purpose, because of the ridicule unusual shapes may give the proposition. The originality should be in the illustrations or catch phrases.

This illustrative feature is all important because it virtually plays the part of the initial paragraph of the letter—it makes the point of contact and gets the attention. It corresponds to the illustrated headline of the advertisement. No rules can be laid down for it as it is a matter for individual treatment.

Colors that create a proper condition of mind through psychological effect must be taken into consideration in the attention-getting feature of the folder. There are certain color schemes which are known to create a particularly appropriate condition of mind. For instance, where quick action is wanted, a flaring color is effective. Where pure sales arguments count most in stating a proposition, blacks and whites have been found the most adequate. Soothing colors, such as soft browns and blues, have been found to appeal to the senses and serve to insure additional interest through a pleasant frame of mind.

The right impression once gained, the style of the reading matter must make the most of it. Many have hesitated to use the postal or folder because they fear for a certain loss, through lack of dignity, where the proposition demands an especially high-class approach. But to some folders, especially of the letter variety now in use, no such criticism could possibly be offered. Really fine samples of these letters bear outside illustrations from photographs or the work of the best artists. Their appearance outside and inside is given every possible atten-

tion to create the impression of distinct value. An appeal to the senses, as in the use of pleasing colors, is a feature of their make-up.

The personal letter inside is perfect in details of typography; it is carefully filled in with prospect's or customer's name; care is taken to see that the filling-in process matches the body of the letter and a personal signature is appended to give a more intimate appeal.

The cost of these folders, because of the high grade of reproduction and the art work, runs considerably above the usual business-getting letter of one-cent mailing. The lowest class of these folders cost approximately the same as the usual letter under two-cent mailing. Any addition of special art work increases their cost proportionately, but the expense is frequently justified.

These illustrated letters depend upon their power of suggestion, through graphic illustration and design, and upon the personal idea of the letter used for getting business. Few enclosures, other than the return card, or reminder card, for filing purposes, are used.

One physician, especially anxious of promoting a new remedy, sent out mailing folders describing his remedy and offered an absolute guarantee of results before payment. The return card enclosed with this folder was engraved with the name and address of the physician above and underneath his absolute guarantee. Because the campaign was so unusual, it produced unexpectedly large returns.

Here, as in the usual business-getting letter, careful attention is given to details. The importance of attracting attention in the first paragraph by careful expression, followed by the creating of desire in the mind of the customer or prospect and the adding of conviction—and finally, the use of reason that compels action cannot be emphasized too strongly.

A more appealing letter could scarcely be written than the following, used in the cigarette campaign previously mentioned. The outside of the folder carried an appropriate drawing by one of the best American artists and the whole folder gave an impression of the highest quality. Note the easy style, designed to catch the reader as he first opens the folder and carry him along fascinated to the end:

Dear Sir:

Attention-getter; natural and effective. Explanation clear, and a desire is created through promise.

Turn back in your mind for one minute to the best Turkish cigarette you ever smoked.

If you remember, it was not so much that the cigarette was fragrant, or that it had a particular flavor, or aroma, or mildness, that caused it to please you--it was the combination of all these qualities that made it so delicious.

This means that the perfection of that cigarette was in the blend, the combination of rare tobacco, each giving forth some one quality.

We have worked out a blend that produces a Tobacco Cigarette which satisfies our ideal at least.

We call the cigarette made of this brand PERESO. We make no secret of the kind of tobacco used--the exact proportion and how to treat the rare leaves is our secret.

To get a perfect aroma, we must take_____ Tobacco: young sprigs of yellow so soft that the Turks call it "Golden Leaf."

We use_____ leaves for their flavor; they have marvelous fragrance as well as delicate mildness.

Giving conviction by details

To get each of these tidbits of Tobacco into perfect condition, so that their qualities will be at their prime when blended, is our profession. The PERESO cigarette is the result.

Suggesting immediate action.

Touch a match to a PERESO cigarette after luncheon today. You will be delighted with its exquisite aroma, its fleeting fragrance and delicate mildness.

Strength in clincher lies in absolute guarantee.

If it is not better than the best cigarette you have ever smoked, allow us the privilege of returning the fifteen cents the package cost you. The original box with the remaining cigarettes, when handed to your dealer, will bring the refund.

Will you join us in a PERESO cigarette today?

Very truly yours,

Adams & Adams

Enclosed in this folder next to the letter was a card bearing a picture of the cigarettes in their box. At the bottom of the folder. underneath the letter, was the phrase: "All good dealers—fifteen cents a package.'

With the mailing card, as with the letter, guarantees, free trial offers and the like, help to strengthen the close of the proposition, win the confidence and bring back the answer.

For example, a large watch company, wishing to appeal to a class of customers who had previously been listed and whose financial standing made its proposition secure, sent out folders signed by department heads asking the privilege of mailing a watch for examination and trial. The letter, which carefully described the advantages of the watch over other watches sold at similar prices, offered this trial without any cost to the prospect, only asking that if the watch suited his needs a draft be mailed to the company. The return card in this case contained an agreement by the firm to hold the prospect in no way obligated to the company, except through purchase. Before returning the card to the company, the prospect was required to sign it, agreeing that, after a trial, either the watch or the money should be sent in.

Before you enter upon the use of mailing cards, be sure you understand the postal regulations regarding them. They are not complicated, but more than one concern has prepared elaborate folders only to be refused admittance to the mails because they did not follow specifications as to size and weight.

Postal laws require that all cards marked "Post Cards" be uniform in design and not less than three and three-fourths inches by four inches and not more than three and nine-sixteenths inches by five and nine-sixteenths inches in size. This means that all return cards, whether enclosed or attached, must be within authorized sizes to allow a first class postal rating.

Making It *Easy* For the PROSPECT to *Answer*

THE mere physical effort of hunting up pen and paper by which to send in an order for SOMETHING HE REALLY WANTS, *deters many a prospect from becoming a customer.*

The man who sells goods by mail must overcome this natural inertia by reducing the act of sending in an order or inquiry to its very simplest terms—by making it so easy for him to reply that he acts while the desire for the goods is still upon him. Here are Eighteen Schemes for making it easy for the prospect to reply—and to reply NOW

THERE are few propositions so good that they will sell themselves. A man may walk into a store with the deliberate intention of buying a shirt, and if the clerk who waits on him is not a good salesman the customer may just as deliberately walk out of the store and go to the place across the street. Lack of attention, over-anxiety to make a quick sale, want of tact on the part of the salesman—any one of a dozen things may switch off the prospective customer although he wants what you have for sale.

Even more likely is this to happen when you are trying to sell him by mail. He probably cares little or nothing about your offer; it is necessary to interest him in the limits of a page or two and convince him that he should have the article described.

And even after his interest has been aroused and he is in a mood to reply, either with an order or a request for further information, he will be lost unless it is made easy for him to

answer; unless it is almost as easy to answer as it is not to answer. A man's interest cools off rapidly; you must get his request for further information or his order before he picks up the next piece of mail.

It is a daily experience to receive a letter or a circular that interests you a little—just enough so you put the letter aside for attention "until you have more time." Instead of being taken up later, it is engulfed in the current of routine and quickly forgotten. Had the offer riveted your attention strongly enough; had the inducements to act been forceful; had the means for answering been easy, you would probably have replied at once.

Make it so easy to answer that the prospect has no good reason for delaying. Make him feel that it is to his interest in every way to act AT ONCE. Do the hard work at your end of the line ; exert yourself to overcome his natural inertia and have the order blank, or the coupon or the post card already for his signature. Don't rely upon his enthusing himself over the proposition and then hunt up paper, pencil and envelope; lay everything before him and follow the argument and the persuasion with a clincher that is likely to get the order.

In making it easy to answer, there are three important elements to be observed. You must create the right mental attitude, following argument and reason with a "do it now" appeal that the reader will find it hard to get away from. Then the cost must be kept in the background, centering attention on the goods, the guarantee, and the free trial offer rather than upon the price. And finally, it is desirable to simplify the actual process—the physical effort of replying.

The whole effort is wasted if there is lacking that final appeal that convinces a man he must act immediately. Your opening may attract his attention; your arguments may convince him that he ought to have your goods; reason may be backed by persuasion that actually creates in him a desire for them, but unless there is a "do it this very minute" hook, and an "easy to accept" offer, the effort of interesting the prospect is wasted.

SCHEME 1—A SPECIAL PRICE FOR A LIMITED PERIOD

The most familiar form of inducement is a special price for a limited period, but this must be handled skillfully or it closes the

gate against an effective follow-up. The time may be extended once, but even that weakens the proposition unless very cleverly worded; and to make a further cut in price prompts the prospect to wait for a still further reduction.

BETTER LOOK AGAIN AND SEE IF YOU HAVE SIGNED YOUR NAME AND WRITTEN YOUR TOWN AND STATE PLAINLY. WE GET LOTS OF ORDERS EVERY YEAR THAT WE CAN'T FILL BECAUSE THE ADDRESS IS INCOMPLETE OR ILLEGIBLE. IT IS BEST TO BE ON THE SAFE SIDE AND WRITE YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS SO PLAINLY THAT THERE CAN BE NO POSSIBLE MISTAKE. DID YOU?

YOU DON'T HAVE TO USE THIS ORDER SHEET YOU CAN ORDER ANY OLD WAY YOU LIKE BUT USING THIS WILL SAVE US BOTH SOME BOTHER

ORDER SHEET

BETTER KEEP AN EXACT COPY OF THIS ORDER FOR FUTURE REFERENCE.

BE SURE TO ALWAYS SIGN YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS WE GET LOTS OF ORDERS WITH NO SIGN OF NAME OR ADDRESS IF YOUR SHIPPING STATION IS DIFFERENT FROM YOUR POST OFFICE BE SURE TO GIVE BOTH

THE MORE CAREFUL YOU ARE TO FILL OUT THE FOLLOWING BLANKS CAREFULLY AND CLEARLY, THE MORE CERTAIN WE ARE TO GET YOUR ORDER FILLED PROMPTLY AND CORRECTLY WE ARE ALL LONG RANGE MIND READERS AND CAN GENERALLY PUZZLE OUT HOW AN ORDER WE MEANT TO BE BUT IT TAKES LOTS OF GUESS WORK

KEEP A COPY OF THE ORDER AND IF YOU DO NOT HEAR FROM US IN A REASONABLE LENGTH OF TIME, WRITE US AGAIN AND TELL US JUST WHAT YOU ORDERED AND WHEN YOU ORDERED IT

DATE _____

NAME _____

STREET OR RURAL ROUTE _____

POST OFFICE _____

COUNTY _____ STATE _____

SHIPPING STATION _____

WHAT RAILROAD PREFERRED _____

WHAT EXPRESS CO PREFERRED _____

MARK IN SQUARE WHICH WAY YOU WANT THIS ORDER SENT ___ MAIL ___ EXPRESS ___ FREIGHT ___

SHALL WE USE OUR BEST JUDGMENT AS TO MANNER OF SHIPPING AND ROUTING? _____

IF OUT OF THE VARIETY ORDERED, HAVE WE YOUR PERMISSION TO SUBSTITUTE EQUAL OR BETTER IN NEAREST VARIETY? _____

	$	C
VALUE OF ORDER		
PAID BY P. O. MONEY ORDER		
PAID BY EXP. MONEY ORDER		
PAID BY DRAFT		
PAID BY CHECK		
PAID IN CURRENCY		
PAID IN SILVER		
PAID IN STAMPS		
TOTAL AMOUNT PAID		

PLEASE DON'T WRITE IN THIS SPACE

OPENED BY _____ BOOKED BY _____

O K'D BY _____ TAGGED BY _____

ROUTING _____

BU	QTS	LBS	PTS	OZ	PKTS	NO.	ARTICLES WANTED	VALUE $	VALUE C

This order sheet simplifies ordering and assures accuracy. On the reverse side are printed several special offers, to which reference may readily be made. The sheet is made to fold up like an envelope and when the gummed edges are pasted down enclosures are perfectly safe

On some propositions the time limit can be worked over and over again on different occasions like special store sales. A large publishing house selling an encyclopedia never varies the price but it gets out special "Christmas" offers, "Withdrawal" sale offers, "Special Summer" offers—anything for a reason to send out some new advertising matter making a different appeal. And each proposition is good only up to a certain time. The

FILL OUT AND MAIL THIS COUPON

TO CHICAGO SUPPLY CO.

I AM INTERESTED IN_____

SEND ME FREE OF COST

MAMMOTH ILLUSTRATED CATALOG____ ☐

BOOK OF HOUSE AND BARN PLANS____ ☐ STRUCTURAL STEEL NEWS____ ☐

HEATING AND PLUMBING GUIDE____ ☐ LINOLEUM BOOKLET____ ☐

BOOK ON ROOFING SIDING, ETC.____ ☐ GASOLINE ENGINES____ ☐

CLOTHING FOR MEN AND BOYS____ ☐ LADIES' WEARING APPAREL____ ☐

SEWING MACHINE BOOK____ ☐ HARNESS AND VEHICLES____ ☐

(PUT CROSS IN SQUARE OPPOSITE BOOKS YOU WISH)

MY NAME_____

TOWN _____ STATE_____

R. F. D._____ BOX NO. _____ ST. NO._____

This coupon, used in advertisements and in printed matter, make it extremely easy to send for information on special subjects

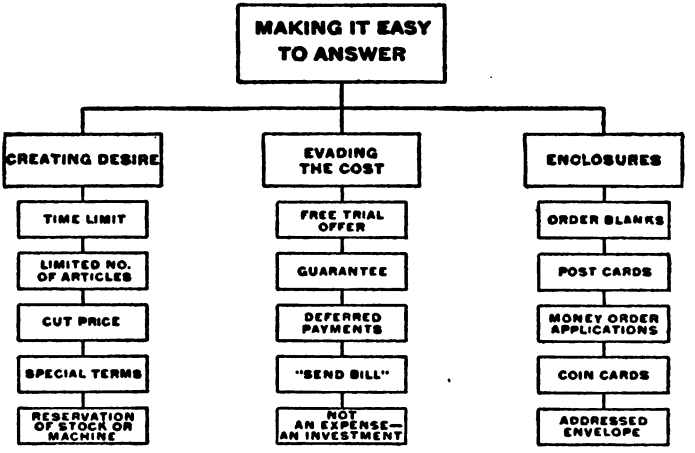
letters must be mailed and postmarked before midnight of the last day, and this time limit pulls the prospect over the dead center of indecision and gets his order. The last day usually brings in more orders than any previous week.

SCHEME 2—THE LAST CHANCE TO BUY

If it is desired to come right back at a prospect, some such paragraph as this is written:

"Only 46 sets left! The success of our special offer surpassed all expectations. It will be necessary to issue another edition at once. The style of binding will be changed but otherwise the two editions will be the same. As we do not carry two styles on hand, we are willing to let you have one of the 46 remaining sets at the SAME TERMS although our special offer expired Saturday night."

And this appeal may pull even better than the first one—provided the proposition is "on the square." It is hard to put sincerity into a letter that is not based on an absolute truth. If



"Only 46 sets left" is merely a salesman's bluff when in fact there are hundreds of sets on hand, the letter will have a hollow ring.

Sincerity is the hardest thing in the world to imitate in a letter and absolute confidence is the key-stone to all mail-order selling.

There are plenty of plausible reasons for making a time limit or a special offer. A large publishing house, selling both maga-

zines and books by mail occasionally turns the trick by a human interest appeal:

"I told the business manager that I believed I could bring our August sales up to equal those of the other months.

"He laughed at me. Always before they have fallen off about twenty per cent.

"But I am going to do it--if you'll help me."

Then the sales manager went on with a special offer; it was a legitimate offer which made a real inducement that proved one of the most successful the firm ever put out.

SCHEME 3—LOW PRICES DURING DULL SEASONS

In making a special price the prospect must be given some plausible reason and sincere explanation for the reduction. A special arrangement with the manufacturer, cleaning out of stock, an introductory offer—some valid reason; and then state this reason in a frank, business-like way, making the story interesting and showing where it is to the advantage of both the prospect and yourself.

"Just to keep my men busy during the dull season I will make an extra pair of trousers at the same price ordinarily charged for a suit, on orders placed during July and August."

This offer sent out by a merchant tailor brought results, for he had a good reason for doing an extra service—he wanted to keep his help busied during the quiet months and the customer took advantage of the inducement.

SCHEME 4—CUT PRICES IN EXCHANGE FOR NAMES

"If you will send us the names of your friends who might be interested" and "if you will show it to your friends" are familiar devices for they present a plausible excuse for cutting a price and serve the double purpose of giving the manufacturer or merchant new names for his mailing list. "A free sample if you send us

your dealer's name" is reasonably certain to call for an immediate reply from most women, for they are always interested in samples.

Making a special introductory offer on some new device or appliance is certainly a legitimate reason for cutting the price. It is an inducement, moreover, that possesses a peculiar strength for a man likes to be the first one in his vicinity or in his line of business to adopt some improved method or system.

SCHEME 5—THE SPECIAL "INTRODUCTORY PRICE"

There can be no excuse for the carelessness that makes a "special introductory price," and later in the same letter or in a follow-up calls attention to the "many satisfied users in your section." Be sure your reason is real—then it rings true and incites prompt action like this offer:

The Wright Copy Holder sells the world over for $3.00. We are certain, however, that once you see the holder actually increasing the output of your own typist you will want to equip your entire office with them. So, for a limited time only, we are going to make you an introductory price of $2.25. Send to-day for one of these holders and give it a thor ough trial. Then any time within thirty days, after you have watched the holder in actual use and seen it pay for itself, in actual increased output, order as many more as you want and we will supply them to you at the same introductory price of $2.25 each After that time we must ask the regular price.

This is convincing. The prospect feels that if the holder were not all right it would not be sold on such terms, for the manufacturers expect that the one holder will give such satisfaction that it will lead to the sale of many more.

"Enclose $2.25 now in any convenient form and let the holder demonstrate for itself what it can save you every day. Don't wait until tomorrow--but send your order today--right now."

This is the closing paragraph and if you are at all interested in copy holders it is likely you will place an order "NOW." And if you don't and if the order is not placed within ten days, the offer may be extended for two weeks and after that a "ten-day only" offer may pull forth an order.

SCHEME 6—SPECIAL TERMS TO PREFERRED CUSTOMERS

A brokerage firm has found that a "Pre-public announcement special offer to preferred clients only" in placing stocks and bonds is a good puller. The recipient is flattered by being

DATE _____

WILSON SAFETY RAZOR CO.

DEAR SIRS:—PLEASE SEND ONE STANDARD WILSON SAFETY RAZOR (PRICE $3 00)

VERY TRULY YOURS,

(YOUR) NAME _____

STREET AND NO _____

CITY _____ STATE _____

IF THE RAZOR IS TO BE SENT THROUGH YOUR DEALER FILL OUT BELOW

(DEALER'S) NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____

IF YOU PREFER THAT WE SEND RAZOR DIRECT TO YOU, PLEASE ENCLOSE REMITTANCE IN EITHER OF THE FOLLOWING FORMS CASH (REGISTERED MAIL), MONEY ORDER, N Y BANK DRAFT CHECK

THE WILSON SAFETY RAZOR CO OR THE DEALER WHO EXECUTES THIS ORDER IN ACCEPTING THE $3.00 FOR THE SAFETY RAZOR AGREES WITH THE PURCHASER THAT IT IS SOLD ON 30 DAYS TRIAL WITHOUT ANY OBLIGATION OR LIABILITY FOR USE DURING THAT PERIOD. IF FOR ANY REASON THE PURCHASER DESIRES TO RETURN IT WITHIN THAT PERIOD THE SELLER SHALL UPON RECEIPT THEREOF REFUND THE $3.00

THE WILSON SAFETY RAZOR CO.

This form of post card provides for two methods of ordering—the customer may take his choice

classed with the "preferred clients" and is not unmindful of the opportunity of getting in on the proposition before there is any public announcement.

In influencing prompt action the time element and the special price are not the only "Act Now" inducements although they are the most common. A man had written to a firm that makes marine engines for prices but the first two or three letters had failed to call forth any further correspondence. So the sales

manager wrote a personal letter in which the following paragraph appeared:

"In looking over our correspondence I notice that you are particularly interested in a 2-horse power engine. I have an engine of that size on hand that I think will interest you. We have just received our exhibits from the Motor Boat Shows. Among these I noticed a 2 H. P. engine and remembering your inquiry for this size engine, it occurred to me that this would make you an ideal engine for your boat."

This was cleverly worded, for although the company would contend that the exhibits were taken from stock, the possible buyer would feel confident that the engine exhibited at the show had been tested and tried in every way. If he were in the market at all, this would probably prove a magnet to draw an immediate reply—for it is always easy to reply if one is sufficiently interested.

SCHEME 7—HOLDING GOODS IN RESERVE

This "holding one in reserve for you" has proved effective with a typewriter company:

"The factory is working to the limit these days and we are behind orders now. But we are going to hold the machine we have reserved for you a few days longer. After that we may have to use it to fill another order. Sign and send us the enclosed blank to-day and let us place the machine where it will be of real service to you. Remember it is covered by a guarantee that protects you against disappointment. If you don't like it, simply return it and back comes your money."

Bond brokers frequently use this same idea, writing to a customer that a block of stock or a part of an issue of bonds had been reserved for him as it represented just the particular kind of investment that he always liked—and reasons follow showing how desirable the investment really is.

In one form or another this scheme is widely used. When the order justifies the expense, a night telegram is sometimes sent

stating that the machine can be held only one day more or something like that. This only is possible on special goods that cannot be readily duplicated.

In all these offers and schemes the price is kept carefully in the background. Many firms never mention the price in the letter, leaving that for the circular, folder or catalogue.

SCHEME 8—THE FREE TRIAL OFFER

Instead of the price being emphasized, it is the free trial offer or the absolute guarantee that is held before the reader.

"Without even risking a cent you can use the Wilbur on your farm free for 30 days. We will ship it to you, freight prepaid, with the plain understanding that, should the Wilbur not come up to every claim we make for it, we will take it off your hands, for we don't want anyone to keep the Wilbur when he is not satisfied with it. Thus, we agree to pay ALL charges and take ALL risk while you are testing and trying the Wilbur for one whole month.

"You see, we have a great deal of confidence in the Wilbur or we could not afford to make you this square and generous offer, which leaves it entirely to you to say whether or not the Wilbur Fanning Mill is a practical and money-making success. Since the 30 days' free trial proposition puts you to no risk whatever, you should take advantage of this opportunity and have a Wilbur shipped right away on the free trial basis.

"To prove it, all you have to do is to fill in, sign and mail this card. After 30 days you CAN return the machine if you are willing."

Not a word about price. All about the free trial and the fact that you are to be the judge of the machine's value.

And not only the free trial but the absolute guarantee is emphasized. "Your money back if not satisfactory" is the slogan of every successful mail-order house. Frequently a facsimile of the guarantee accompanies the letter; always it is emphasized.

SCHEME 9—THE "YOUR MONEY BACK" OFFER

A manufacturer of certain machines for shop use wastes little time in describing the machine or telling what all it will do. The broad assertion is made that after a month's use it would

not be sold at the price paid for it, and instead of arguing the case and endeavoring to prove the statement, the company strives to make it easy to place a trial order. Here are two of the three paragraphs that make up one of its letters:

"To prove it, all you have to do is to fill in, sign and mail this card. After 30 days you MAY return the machine if you want to.

"Try it out. Never mind what we might SAY about the uses your shop men would be getting out of it--FIND OUT. It is easy. Just send the card."

This is simplicity itself. The writer does not put us on the defensive by trying to argue with us. We are to be the judge and he compliments us by the inference that we "don't need to be told" but can judge for ourselves as to whether it is worth keeping. The price is held in the background and the actual ordering is nothing more than to sign a post card. There is no reason at all why we should delay; we could hardly turn the letter over to be filed without feeling that we were blind to our best interest in not replying.

SCHEME 10—THE DISCOUNT FOR CASH

Publishers of a magazine angle for renewals without boldly snatching for a man's pocketbook, by this presentation:

"Simply tell us NOW to continue your subscription. Remit at your convenience. Better still, wrap a $1.00 bill in this post card--and mail to us today. We will send not only the twelve issues paid for, but will--as a cash discount--extend your subscription an extra two months."

Here the cost is brought in almost as an afterthought, yet in a way that actually brings the cash with the renewal.

"Fill out the enclosed order and the goods will be shipped at once and billed in the regular way."

The payment is not in sight—it hasn't yet turned the corner "Billed in the regular way" catches our order where we would postpone action if it meant reaching down into our pockets and buying a money order or writing out a check. The payment looks afar off—and it will not seem so much if the account is paid along with the rest of the bills at the first of the month.

SCHEME 11—THE FIRST INSTALMENT AS A "DEPOSIT"

Where goods are sold on "easy terms" and a first payment required, many correspondents refer to the remittance as a "deposit." In the strong guarantee it is expressly stated that in case of dissatisfaction, the "deposit" will be returned.

Even the deferring of the payment a few days helps to pull an order. It is not that a man is niggardly or that he does not want the article but it is the desire, rooted deep in human nature, to hold onto money after it has been hard earned.

"To facilitate your prompt action, I am enclosing a convenient postal card order. Our shipping department has had instructions to honor this as readily as they would your check. There is no need to send the customary initial payment in advance. Simply sign and mail the enclosed card; when the file comes, pay the expressman the first payment of $2.00."

Here the payment was very small and it was deferred only a few days, but long enough to make it *seem easier*, and the orders were much larger than when cash was required with the order.

SCHEME 12—SENDING GOODS FOR INSPECTION

"Take no risk" is the reassuring line in many advertisements and letters. "Send no money—take no risk. We do not even ask you to make a deposit until you are satisfied that you need the Verbest in your business. Simply send the coupon today and the Verbest goes forward at our risk."

Such offers pull best when simply worded and contain some such phrase as "Without obligation on my part, you may send

me." It gives reassurance that there is no catch and inspires the confidence that is the basis of the mail-order business.

Then there is the argument that the device or equipment will pay for itself—a powerful leverage when rightly applied.

Here is the way the manufacturer of a certain machine keeps the cost in the shadow:

"There is no red tape to go through. Simply sign the enclosed blank and forward to-day with the first payment of $3.00. The Challenge will go forward promptly. And the balance you can pay as the machine pays for itself--at the rate of seventeen cents a day."

Simple, isn't it? You forget all about the cost. The paragraph is a cleverly worded "Do it now" appeal and the cost is kept entirely in the background.

SCHEME 13—THE EXPENSE VERSUS THE INVESTMENT ARGUMENT

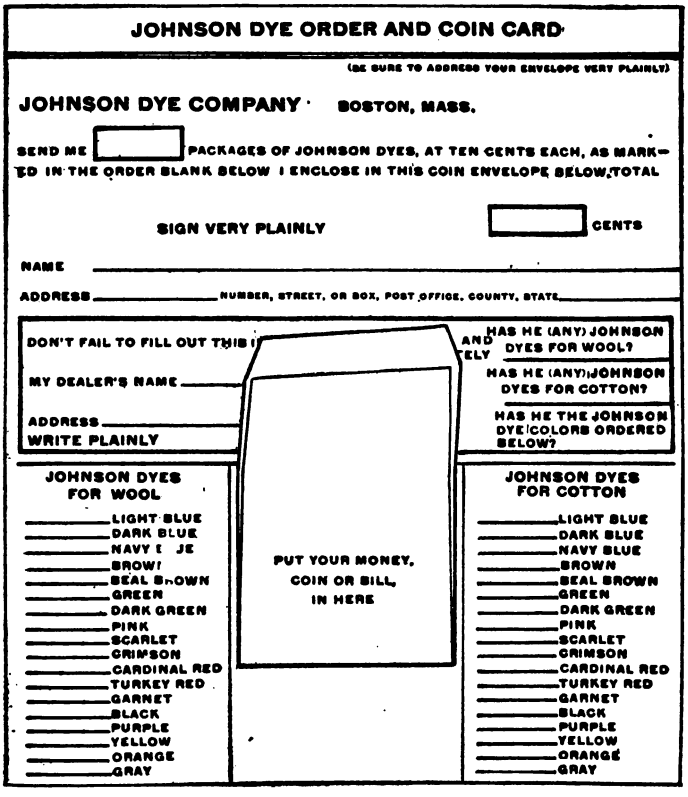
A companion argument is that the device is not an expense but an investment. Here there is no attempt to put the cost price in the background but to justify the outlay as a sound investment—a business proposition that is to be tested by the investment standard. This is a strong argument with the shrewd business man who figures the value of things not on the initial cost, but upon the profits they will earn and the dividends they will pay.

The whole proposition must be shaped in such a way that it is easy for the prospect to buy. He must want to buy and the experienced correspondent realizes that every word and phrase must be avoided that is capable of being misconstrued. There are no details so small that they do not have a bearing on the success of a campaign.

SCHEME 14—THE RETURN POSTAL FILLED IN FOR MAILING

And now that you have made clear your proposition and shown your proof, now that you have led your prospect to the buying point, the next step is to make him send you

the order. And the only way to do this is to follow the example of the good salesman: put the pen in his hand, your finger on the dotted line, and slip the order blank before him. The salesman does these things because he knows that he might lose the sale if he asked his prospect to hunt up a pen, a letterhead and some ink. He knows the value of making it easy to buy. And in selling by mail you



JOHNSON DYE ORDER AND COIN CARD

(BE SURE TO ADDRESS YOUR ENVELOPE VERY PLAINLY)

JOHNSON DYE COMPANY BOSTON, MASS.

SEND ME _____ PACKAGES OF JOHNSON DYES, AT TEN CENTS EACH, AS MARKED IN THE ORDER BLANK BELOW I ENCLOSE IN THIS COIN ENVELOPE BELOW TOTAL

SIGN VERY PLAINLY _____ CENTS

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____ NUMBER, STREET, OR BOX, POST OFFICE, COUNTY, STATE _____

DON'T FAIL TO FILL OUT THIS I AND TELY

MY DEALER'S NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

WRITE PLAINLY

HAS HE (ANY) JOHNSON DYES FOR WOOL?

HAS HE (ANY) JOHNSON DYES FOR COTTON?

HAS HE THE JOHNSON DYE COLORS ORDERED BELOW?

PUT YOUR MONEY, COIN OR BILL, IN HERE

JOHNSON DYES FOR WOOL

_____ LIGHT BLUE
_____ DARK BLUE
_____ NAVY BLUE
_____ BROWN
_____ SEAL BROWN
_____ GREEN
_____ DARK GREEN
_____ PINK
_____ SCARLET
_____ CRIMSON
_____ CARDINAL RED
_____ TURKEY RED
_____ GARNET
_____ BLACK
_____ PURPLE
_____ YELLOW
_____ ORANGE
_____ GRAY

JOHNSON DYES FOR COTTON

_____ LIGHT BLUE
_____ DARK BLUE
_____ NAVY BLUE
_____ BROWN
_____ SEAL BROWN
_____ GREEN
_____ DARK GREEN
_____ PINK
_____ SCARLET
_____ CRIMSON
_____ CARDINAL RED
_____ TURKEY RED
_____ GARNET
_____ BLACK
_____ PURPLE
_____ YELLOW
_____ ORANGE
_____ GRAY

A manila enclosure that contains a small envelope suitable for sending coins or bills. The directions not only cover all points on the order but give the company information for its follow-up

must do the same. Don't guide him on to a decision to order and then leave him at sea as to how to do it. Show him exactly what to do. It is easy enough simply to say, "Write me a letter," or, "send me $2.00." The very man you want most to sell may not know how to write a clearly worded order. Even if he does, the fact that you ask him to go to the trouble of getting his writing materials may serve to postpone the act and lose him the desire to buy. So give him the order ready to sign, with as few changes as possible required. And give him an addressed return envelope to send it in. If no money is to be sent with the order, put it on a post card. "Sign and mail the card" borders on the extreme of simplicity in buying.

You cannot be too simple in your method of soliciting orders. If your proposition will admit of saying, "Pin a dollar bill to this letter and mail," say it. If more details are needed, make them as simple as possible.

SCHEME 15—THE MONEY ORDER READY FOR SIGNATURE

If you want him to send a money order, help him to get it by enclosing a money order application filled in except for his name.

Avoid the possibility of giving the order blank a legal appearance. Simply have the order say, "Send me——" and as little more as is necessary. Show the prospect that there are no strings or jokers in your blank. Make it so simple that there is no possibility of misunderstanding its terms.

If the article is one that is sold in much the same way to every purchaser, it is best to print the entire order, leaving only the date line and the signature line blank. If the purchaser has to choose between two styles of the article or between two quantities, the order blank may be printed, so that the quantity not wanted may be crossed out.

SCHEME 16—ORDERING BY MARKS

In dealing with an unlettered class of people, it is well to put a footnote in very small type under optional lines or words and to instruct the purchaser to "Cross out the style you do not want" or "Put an X opposite the quantity ordered."

In case of articles that are sold for cash and also on the easy payment plan, it is better to have two separate order blanks printed on different colors of paper, one plainly headed "Cash Order Blank," and the other "Easy Payment Order Blank." Avoid the "Instalment Plan." The name has lost standing of late; the wording "Easy Payment Plan" is better and more suggestive.

SCHEME 17—THE COIN CARD

The coin-card method is a winner for sales under a dollar. The card, with its open holes inviting the quarter or the fifty-cent piece, and the order blank printed conveniently on the flap-captures much loose money.

The post office department will furnish money order applications with the name of the advertiser printed in the proper spaces. These printed applications should be sent for the prospect's convenience in cases where a money order is likely to be used. They insure that the advertiser's name will come before postmasters written in the preferred form, and they also relieve much of the hesitancy and embarrassment of the people that do not know how to make out an application.

SCHEME 18—SENDING MONEY AT THE OTHER FELLOW'S RISK

One of the best schemes for easy ordering invited the reader to fold a dollar bill in the letter "right now" and mail the letter at the risk of the firm. That effective closing removed the tendency to delay until a check or a money order could be secured. It took away the fear of loss in the mails. It largely increased the returns of the letter.

It is sometimes an excellent plan to suggest that the reader sign and mail at once a postal card that is enclosed. If there is an inch or two of space at the bottom of the letter, a blank order or request may be written there that needs only a signature to make it complete. In the closing paragraph, direct the reader to sign and return the slip.

An addressed envelope should always be enclosed. It will not always be used, but it will be used by most people, and it assures the correct address and facilitates the handling of incoming mail.

How To Write Letters That *Appeal* To WOMEN

THE *two-page letter which a man would toss into the waste basket unread may be read by a woman with increasing interest at each paragraph. The average woman does not have a large correspondence; her mail is not so heavy but what she* FINDS TIME TO READ EVERY LETTER THAT APPEALS TO HER EVEN SLIGHTLY. *The printed heading may show a letter to be from a cloak company. She doesn't really need a new coat—and anyhow she could hardly afford it this fall—but she would just like to see what the styles are going to be like—and it doesn't cost anything to send for samples. Yet if the writer of the letter is skilled and understands the subtle workings of a woman's mind,* THE CLOAK IS HALF SOLD BY THE TIME SHE FILLS OUT THE POSTAL CARD. *This chapter tells why*

THE more personal a letter is made the more successful it will prove. Several large mail-order houses, handling thousands of letters every day, are gradually abandoning the use of form letters, making every communication personal. The additional expense is of course great but the increased business apparently justifies the new policy.

The carelessness that sends out to women form letters beginning "Dear Sir" has squandered many an advertising appropriation. A man might not notice such a mistake or he might charitably blame it onto a stupid mailing clerk, but a woman—never

The mail-order houses with progressive methods not only guard against inexcusable blunders and tactless letters but they are studying the classes and the individuals with whom they are dealing. A mail may bring in two letters—one, from a farmer, laboriously scrawled on a bit of wrapping paper; the other, from a lady in town, written on the finest stationery. Both may request catalogues and the same printed matter will be sent to each, but only the amateur correspondent would use the same form letter in reply.

The book agent who rattles off to every prospect the set speech which the house furnished him with his prospectus either throws up the work as a "poor proposition" or changes his tactics, and the form letter that tries to wing all classes of individuals is most likely to miss all.

In making an appeal to women, the first thing to be considered is the stationery. Good quality of paper is a sound investment. Saving money by use of cheap stationery is not economy for it prejudices the individual against the sender before the letter is ever opened.

Firms that cater to women of the better class follow out the current styles in writing paper. The "proper" size and shape of sheet and envelope immediately make a favorable impression. Various tints may be used to good effect and instead of a flaring lithographed letterhead, the firm's monogram may be stamped in the upper left-hand corner. The return card on the envelope should not be printed on the face but on the reverse flap. Such a letter is suggestive of social atmosphere; it is complimentary to the lady.

In beginning the letter it should strike at some vulnerable spot in feminine nature—but it must be so skillfully expressed that the motive is not apparent. If the line is anything that can be shown by sample, manage to work into the very beginning of the letter the fact that samples will be mailed free upon request. Women never tire of looking at samples; they pull thousands of orders that could never have been landed with printed descriptions or illustrations. A most successful house selling suits and cloaks has proved conclusively that nothing will catch the attention of a woman so quickly as an offer of free samples or some reference to style and economy in woman's dress. It urges upon its correspondents the desirability of getting in this appeal in the very first sentence.

Letters from this house begin with some pointed reference: "Becoming styles, we know, are what you want, together with quality and the greatest economy." Or, "You know we guarantee you a perfect-fitting suit, of the prettiest materials in the market—whatever you may select."

This letter has the personal signature of the sales manager:

Dear Madam:

I have been intending to write you ever since you sent for your REPUBLIC Style Book, but I have been so busy in connection with our new building as to hardly find time.

But you are no doubt now wondering just why, out of the many, many thousand requests for the REPUBLIC Style Book, I should be so particularly interested in yours. And so I am going to tell you frankly my reason.

It is this: In your community there is only a very small number of all the ladies who wear REPUBLIC Suits, and they ALL should wear them--and WOULD wear them if they could but be made to know the real beauty of our suits. I want to show them just how beautiful a REPUBLIC Suit can be.

So I ask you, would you like to have made for you this season, the most beautiful suit you ever had?

Would you like now, a suit more stylish, better fitting, more becoming, better made--MORE PERFECT--than any other suit you have had?

If this interests you at all, then I am ready personally to see to it for you.

A suit that is different from the ones worn by your acquaintances is what I am now speaking of; not different because made of some unusual material, or in some over-stylish design, but different because BETTER. It is the difference of QUALITY, of genius in its cutting, that I want your friends and neighbors to see and admire in your suit.

Now I am going to say to you very frankly that I have a reason for wanting to make your suit attract the admiration of your friends. I wish your suit to convince THEM that they, too, should have their suits made by the REPUBLIC.

Would you care to have me tell you just how I propose to put this unusual grace and style into your suit? First, everything depends upon the LINES of a suit--if its lines are beautiful, the suit is beautiful. Now we have at the REPUBLIC

a chief designer, who is a genius in putting the greatest beauty and grace into the lines of his models.

We say he is a genius, because a man can be a genius in designing just as a musician or any exceptionally skillful man may be said to be a genius. And when a highly trained cutter and an expert tailor make up one of this man's designs, the result is a suit that stands apart from all others, by reason of the attractiveness there always is in grace and style and beauty.

Such is the suit I offer to have made for you.

But there is to be no increased cost to you for this special service. The price of every REPUBLIC Made-to-Measure Suit is plainly stated under its description in our Style Book. That is all you'll have to pay.

If you wish you can have a dressmaker take your measurements and we will pay her for her trouble, as explained on the enclosed Dressmaker's Certificate. Please read this certificate.

"Now, what am I to do?" you ask. Simply send your order to me personally. Just say, "Make my suit as you agree in your letter."

Now if you wish other samples or information, write to me personally and I will take care of it for you. But, the sooner you get your order to me the better.

Please consider that we, at the REPUBLIC, will always be glad to be of service to you. I, especially, will be pleased to have the opportunity of making you a suit of which you can be proud and of which we will be glad to have you say, "This is a REPUBLIC Suit."

Shall I hear from you soon?

Yours very respectfully,

J. L. Lawrence

This letter was sent out on very tasty tinted stationery. It was written by someone who understood the subtle processes of the feminine mind. In the first place the lady is flattered because the sales manager himself writes to her and offers to give her order his personal attention. Surely an opportunity to secure the very best suit the house can turn out!

"It is the difference of QUALITY, of genius in its cutting, that I want your friends and neighbors to see and admire in your suit." No fulsome flattery here; it is so delicately introduced that it appears entirely incidental, but the shaft strikes home. There is just enough left unsaid to stir the imagination. The logic and the matter-of-fact argument that would appeal to the man gives way to suggestion and persuasion and the necessity for prompt action is tactfully inserted at the proper place.

In another letter from the same house the prospect was impressed by the great care used in making up garments:

"In order that your measurements may be taken exactly right, we send you with this letter a 'Republic' Tape Measure. This is the same kind that our cutters use and it is entirely accurate.

"We send this tape measure to you because we want to avoid the least possibility of variation in your measurements. We want to make your suit perfect, and we will personally see to every detail of its making."

No battery of arguments and proofs could make the same appeal to the woman as the tape line sent in this way. The suggestion is more powerful with a woman when skillfully handled than statements, assertions and arguments. Compare the subtle appeal in the above to the paragraphs taken from a letter sent out by a house that was trying to enter the mail-order field:

"We want you to read our booklet carefully for it explains our methods of doing business fully. We are very particular about filling orders and know you will be pleased with any suit you may buy from us.

"Our financial standing should convince you that if anything is not right we will make it so. We guarantee satisfaction and solicit a trial order."

In the first place, the average woman would know nothing about the financial standing of the house. It is evident that the man who wrote the letter had been handling the correspondence

with dealers and firms that necessarily keep posted on the rating of manufacturers. And the way the proposition is stated that "if anything is not right we will make it so" suggests that possibly the suit might not be satisfactory.

But while women are susceptible to flattery there is danger of bungling, of making the effort so conscious that it is offensive. "Your natural beauty will be enhanced by one of our suits for our cutter understands how to set off a woman's form and features so she is admired wherever she goes." The average woman is disgusted and reads no further.

HOW DIFFERENT ARGUMENTS APPEAL TO WOMEN

Style	*Foremost consideration*
Price	*Secondary consideration*
Quality	*Slight*
Exclusiveness	*Valuable*
Service	*Minor importance*
Sentiment	*Effective*
Flattery	*Expedient*
Testimonials	*Impressive*
Reputation	*Desirable*

Mere cleverness in expression will fall wide of the mark and facetiousness should be strictly avoided. It is better to depend on a very ordinary letter which will have little effect on the reader one way or the other than to offend her by too obvious flattery or an apparent attempt to make capital from a feminine weakness.

Arouse her curiosity—the curiosity of woman is proverbial, and a general store at Nettleton, Mississippi, found a "Cousin Elsie" letter, mailed at Atlanta, Georgia, to be the most effective advertising it ever sent out, for it aroused the greatest curiosity among the women of Nettleton. Here is a letter just as it was sent out, the name of the recipient filled in on the typewriter:

My Dear Cousin:-

I know you will be surprised to get this letter. I spent such a delightful Winter in California and wished so often that my dear Nettleton kin could be with me.

On my return trip, I met the Wilson Piano Co's Manager. He told me the Nettleton Supply Co. was giving away one of its $400.00 pianos this year in advertising. I do hope that some of my ambitious Cousins will get to work and get it. It will certainly be worth working for.

Then what do you think? The first thing when I came to the office this morning, I made an invoice of the Millinery that the Nettleton Supply Co's buyer had bought of our house and I was certainly surprised to know that such beautiful stuff is sold in a small town like Nettleton. Our salesman said that this is one of the nicest bills that he has sold this season.

I met the buyer and talked with her about all of you and promised to attend the Spring opening. I know it will be one of the best the house has had, as it will have so much pretty stuff to show.

I will have only a day or two and I want to ask you and all my Cousins to meet me at this opening. I am anxious to see you and this will be a good opportunity for us to meet. Don't fail to meet me.

I have lots of work to do and must bring this letter to a close. With a heart full of love for all the dear old Nettleton folks and an extra lot for you, from,

Your Cousin,

Elsie.

P. S.-Don't fail to come to the opening, I will be there if possible. Miss Smiley will let you know when to come. Buy a pair of Peters' shoes this Spring; you will never regret it.

Such letters could not be used very often but occasionally they are immensely effective. "Mrs. Elliott's troubles and how they were cured" have become famous in some parts of the country. Written in long hand, they bore every resemblance to a social letter from a lady to some old neighbor and told how many of her housekeeping troubles had been ended by using a certain kind of furniture polish. The letters were written in such a chatty style that they were read through and passed around to other members of the family.

The appeal to women must hover around her love of style and her desire for economy. Bring in either subject deftly at

the beginning of a letter and she will be an interested reader of all the sales talk that follows.

Several mail-order houses have trained women to handle this part of their correspondence for they are more apt in the use of

My dear:

I know you will be surprised to hear from me and I may as well confess that I am not altogether disinterested in writing you at this time but I am glad to say that the duty imposed upon me is a pleasure as well.

You know some time ago after I had painted my floors, I wrote the company whose paint I used and they put my experience in the form of a little booklet entitled "Mrs. Elliot's Troubles."

This is the first page of a facsimile hand-written letter that proved highly successful as it appealed to feminine curiosity and insured careful reading

feminine expressions. Let a man try to describe some article as "perfectly splendid," or "really sweet" and he will stumble over it before he gets to the end of the sentence. Yet when these same hackneyed phrases are brought in naturally by a woman who "feels just that way" about the garment she is describing, they will take hold of the reader in a way that is beyond the understanding of the masculine mind.

In the appeal to women there is more in this tinge of off-hand refinement, the atmosphere, the enthusiasm shown and in the little personal touches, than in formidable arguments and logical

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Dear Madam:

This mail is bringing to you a copy of our new catalogue, describing our complete line of Hawkeye Kitchen Cabinets.

The catalogue will tell you how you can do your kitchen work in half the usual time.

It will tell you how to save your strength, time, and energy--how to relieve yourself of the burden of kitchen drudgery.

Aren't these things worth looking into?

Just try counting the unnecessary steps you take in preparing your next meal. Calculate the time you lose in looking for articles that should be at your fingers' ends but are not.

Imagine, if you can, what it would save you if you could do away with your pantry, kitchen table, and cupboard and get all the articles needed in the preparation of a meal in one complete well-ordered piece of furniture that could be placed between the range and sink, so you could reach almost from one to the other. Think of the steps it would save you.

Imagine a piece of furniture containing special places for everything--from the egg beater to the largest kitchen utensil--a piece of furniture that would arrange your provisions and

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This letter is written in an easy, natural style, which is aided by the short illustration of the car-fare well chosen. The closing is in keeping with is a longer one than the man would read about a kitchen

reasons. What is triviality to a man is frequently the clinching statement with a woman. And so a fixed set of rules can not be formulated for writing letters to women. Instead of a hard and fast rule, the correspondent must have in mind the ideas and the features that naturally appeal to the feminine mind and use them judiciously.

All women, for instance, are influenced by what other women do, and there is no other touch more productive of sales than the reference to what some other customer has ordered, or what comments she has made. Both in educational campaigns and

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utensils in such a systematic way that you could (in the dark) find almost anything you wanted.

If you can draw in your mind a picture of such a piece of furniture, you will have some idea of what a Buckeye Kitchen Cabinet is like.

Now, don't you want one of these automatic servants? Don't you think you need it?

If so, send for one NOW. Don't put it off a single day. You have been without it too long already.

It doesn't cost much to get a Hawkeye. If you don't care to pay cash, you can buy on such easy payments that you will never miss the money--only five cents a day for a few months. You would think nothing of paying five cents a day street-car fare to keep from walking a few blocks in the pure air and sunshine, yet you are walking miles in your kitchen when one street-car fare a day for a few months would do away with it.

Send your order right along and use the Cabinet thirty days. If it doesn't do what we say it will, or if you do not consider that it is more than worth the money, send it back at our expense and we will refund whatever you have paid. That's fair, isn't it?

We pay freight on all-cash orders

Yours truly,

Adams & Adams

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paragraphs. The appeal to the imagination is skillful, and the homely the general quality of the letter and was undoubtedly effective. This letter cabinet, but there are not too many details for women readers

in writing to regular customers on some specific proposition it is a good policy to work in some reference to a recent sale:

"One of our very good customers from your neighborhood writes us that her new suit (Style 3587) has caused her more perfectly delightful compliments than she ever had before."

Such testimonials are to be found in every mail-order house that has attained even a moderate success, for women who are pleased are given to writing letters profuse in their expressions of appreciation.

At times it is desirable to quote a whole letter, withholding, of course, the name of the writer. The most convincing letters to use are those that tell about first orders, or how some friend induced the writer to send in a trial order, or how she came to be a customer of the mail-order house. These personalities add a touch of human interest, they create an atmosphere that is real, they mean much to a woman.

Quoted letters are especially effective in getting a first order after a woman has become sufficiently interested to write in for a catalogue. Here is one lifted from a letter sent out by the general manager of a suit house:

Dear Mr. Wardwell:

You ask me to tell you how I came to send you my first order.

I think I had written for your Style Book three seasons. Each time I found many garments I liked. I found waists and dresses and skirts that were much prettier than the ones I could get elsewhere. And yet, some way or other, while I longed for these very garments, I did not order them. I think it was simply because I never had ordered by mail.

One day when looking through your Style Book the thought came to me: "If you want this dress, why don't you stop hesitating and wondering and sit down right now and order it?"

And I did--and ever since I have bought my suits, dresses, waists, almost everything, from you.

Testimonial letters from prominent women, wives of distinguished men and others whose names are widely known, are always effective. A number of years ago Mrs. Frances Cleveland, wife of the ex-president, wrote to a furniture factory for a cedar chest. The order was in Mrs. Cleveland's own handwriting and the letter was at once photographed and a facsimile enclosed with all the letters and advertising matter sent out by the furniture house. Such things have an influence on the feminine mind that the skilled correspondent never overlooks.

The reason that so many letters fail to pull is because the correspondents are not salesmen; they are unable to put actual selling talk into a letter. For after you have aroused a woman's curiosity and appealed to her love of style and her desire to economize, there has got to be some genuine, strong selling talk to get the order.

The difference is brought out by a large Chicago mail-order house which cites the customer who inquired about a certain ready made skirt in a 34-inch length which could not be supplied as the regular measurements run from 37 to 43. A correspondent thinking only of the number of letters that can be answered in a day simply wrote, "We are very sorry we cannot supply the skirt you mention in the length you desire, because this garment is not made regularly in shorter lengths than 37 inches. Regretting our inability to serve you," and so forth.

The letter inspector threw out the letter and dictated another:

"We cannot furnish skirt, catalogue number H4982, in a 34-inch length, but we can supply it in a 37-inch length; this is the shortest length in which it is regularly made. You can have it altered to a 34-inch length at a small expense, and as the skirt is an unusually pretty style and of exceptionally good value, the price being only $7.65, we trust you will favor us with your order."

This is letter-writing plus salesmanship. The correspondent did not spill over in his eagerness to get the order; he did not describe the skirt as the finest to be had nor insist that it was the most wonderful bargain in the catalogue. Rather he told her it was an "unusually pretty style and of exceptionally good value." It was so simply told and so naturally that it carried conviction.

It refers to style and to economy—two things that appeal to every woman.

Letters personally signed by the "Expert Corsetiere" of a large wholesale house were mailed to a selected list of lady customers in cities where the Diana corsets were handled:

Dear Madam;

Here's an incident that proves how important corsets are in wearing the new straight, hipless gowns.

Mrs. Thompson, who is stouter than the new styles require, tried on a princess gown in a department store. The gown itself was beautiful, but it was most unbecoming and did not fit at all, tho it was the right size for her.

Mrs. Thompson was about to give up in despair saying, "I can't wear the new styles"--when a saleswoman suggested that she be fitted with a Diana Corset in the model made for stout figures.

The result was that the princess gown took the lines of the corset and fitted Mrs. Thompson perfectly. In fact the original lines of the gown were brought out to better advantage.

This only goes to prove that with a good corset any gown will drape right and take the lines of the corset.

You'll find it easy to wear the new long straight style gowns if you wear a Diana corset in the model made for your style of figure.

The Dianas are made after the same models as the most expensive French corsets costing $10 to $25. Yet $1 to $5 buys a Diana.

The Diana is not heavy and uncomfortable as so many of the new corsets are this year. The fabrics from which they are made are light and comfortable. At the same time, so closely meshed and firmly woven that with reasonable wear every Diana corset is guaranteed to keep its good shape and style or you will receive a new corset without charge.

The Diana dealer, whose card is enclosed, invites you to call and see these new corsets.

Will you go in to see the Diana today?

Very truly yours,

Grace Le Fountain

The letter is in a chatty style that assures its being read. It does not say, "We have just the corset for you stout women"—but that is what it means. It interests and appeals especially to the stout women without reminding them offensively that they are too heavy to wear the styles in vogue.

The National Cloak Company has studied the methods that take firm hold on the women and finds it necessary to bear down heavily on the guarantee of satisfaction. Many women are inclined to be skeptical and hesitate long before sending money to an unknown house. So the National uses a guarantee tag insuring customers against dissatisfaction, sending these tags out with the goods. It assures the return of money if the order is not all right in every way and further agrees to pay all the express charges. Free reference is made to this tag in the company's letters and it gives a certain concreteness to the guarantee feature. This tag makes its own argument, proves its own case.

Business men generally take it for granted that satisfaction goes with the goods; their experience enables them to size up a proposition quickly and if there is any flaw in the advertisements or the company's methods, they pass it by. But women, not so familiar with business affairs, must be approached from a different angle. Little points must be explained and guarantees must be strongly emphasized. The formal letter which appeals to a man by going straight to the point would, by its very conciseness, offend the vanity of a woman.

The successful correspondent never overlooks the susceptibility of a woman to flattery—but it must be the suggestion of flattery, the implied compliment, rather than the too obvious compliment.

"The handsomest gown money will buy can't make you look well unless your corset is the correct shape."

This is the opening sentence in a letter advertising a particular corset. The lady is gracefully complimented by the intimation that she wears handsome gowns, yet there is not the slightest suggestion that the reference was dragged in as a part of the selling scheme.

Instead of insinuating that she must buy cheaply, let it be hinted that she is actuated by the very laudable motive of economy. "You would scarcely believe that such delicious coffee could be sold at 20 cents—unless you happen to know that the flavor of coffee depends largely upon the blending." Here the low price is emphasized but there is no hint of forced economy; rather it suggests that the best quality can be obtained without paying a high price.

"You can offer your most particular guest a cup of Regal coffee and know she has never tasted a more delicious flavor and fragrance."

This is the beginning of a letter that successfully introduced a new coffee. Here is a tactful compliment—the taking for granted that the recipient entertains guests of some importance—guests who are particular and will notice her coffee. There are few things that the average woman is more concerned about than that her guests will be pleased with her refreshments. The suggestion that she herself would enjoy or even that her family would enjoy this coffee does not make such direct appeal to a woman as this assurance that it will please her particular guests.

The house that uses the same kind of letter on men and women will never score such big results as the firm that understands the different processes of thinking and the different methods of making the appeal. With the man it is reason, logic, argument; with the woman it is suggestion, flattery, persuasion. The correspondent who aims to establish a large mail-order trade with women must study their whims, their prejudices, their weaknesses and their characteristics before he can make an appeal that brings in the orders and makes permanent customers of trial buyers.

It is the little things—this subtle insight into feminine nature that marks the successful selling letter to the woman. They are not things that can be set down and numbered in a text book; they are qualities of mind that must be understood and delicately handled. Rightly used they are more powerful than irrefutable arguments and indisputable facts.

How To Write Letters That *Appeal* to MEN

ONE-HALF *of the form letters sent out to men are thrown away unread. A bare* ONE-THIRD *are partly read before discarded, while only* ONE-SIXTH *of them—approximately 15 per cent—are read through. The reason why such a large proportion is ineffective is this: the letter-writer, through ignorance or carelessness, does not strike the notes that appeal to* every *man. Here are some of the subtle ways by which correspondents have forced the attention of* MEN *by appealing to traits distinctly masculine*

IF you received a dozen letters in your mail this morning it is probable that there were just twelve different angles to the appeals that were made. For most correspondents are not thinking about the man they are writing to but are concerned solely with thoughts about the propositions they have in hand—and that is why the great bulk of the letters that are opened in the morning pause at the desk only momentarily before continuing their way to the furnace room. It is the exceptional correspondent who stops to analyze his letters, looking at them from every viewpoint, and then tests out his conclusions, trying one appeal after another until he evolves certain principles that pull letter writing out of the class of uncertainties and enable him to depend upon definite returns.

For there are appeals that are practically universal. Appeal to a man's ambition and you have his interest: larger

income, better position, some honor or recognition—touch these and no matter how busy, he will find time to read your message.

You've got to have more money.

Your salary, without income, is not enough. The man who depends upon salary alone to make him rich--well-to-do--or even comfortable, is making the mistake of his life. For the minute you stop working, the money stops coming in. Lose a day and you lose a day's pay--while expenses go right on.

Don't you think it's time you got Nature to work for you? A dollar put into a peach orchard will work for you days, nights and Sundays. It never stops to sleep or eat but keeps on growing--growing--from the very minute you put your money in.

Think of the difference between a dollar invested with us and increasing and yielding day by day and the dollar which you use to purchase a few moments idle diversion or pleasure. The latter is lost forever--the dollar put to earning with us earns forever.

"More money." That appeal strikes home. One glance at the letter and a man is interested. He may not have money to invest but the other letters will remain unopened until he finds out whether there is not some plan or scheme that will actually mean more money to him.

The correspondence schools recognized the force of this appeal and developed it so systematically that it might be called the standard correspondence school argument.

Here is one of the best pulling arguments:

Pay-day--what does it mean to you?

Does your money "go 'round?" Or does it fail to stop all the gaps made by last week's or month's bills?

Last week--according to actual, certified reports on file in our office--A. B. C. men got their salary raised as a direct result of becoming more proficient from studying A. B. C. courses.

Don't you think it's time that salary raise was coming your way?

The same product—a correspondence course—may use the line of appeal peculiarly appropriate to men—that of responsibility. Such a letter leads out:

If your expenses were doubled tomorrow could you meet them--without running heavily in debt?

If you had to have more money on which to live--to support those dependent upon you-- could you make it?

You could if you had the training afforded by our course; it has doubled other men's salaries, it can do the same for you.

Next to the appeal to ambition in strength is this appeal to responsibility. This is the burden of the arguments used by insurance companies, savings banks and various investment companies.

An insurance company marketing a particularly strong investment policy, and which follows the plan of writing to the prospect direct from the home office, finds that such a letter as this pulls:

Our Agent, Mr. Blank, no doubt has presented to you a majority of the many advantages of a _____ policy in the_____. But we want you to have in writing, and signed by an officer of the company, what we regard as the main reason you should be with us.

No civilized man can evade responsibility. Should anything happen to you, you are responsible for that loss--to your business--your family--your friends. Is your responsibility great enough--without the protection of the Regal Company to ''make good'' your own loss?

But the kind of appeal to make is only one phase of the problem. Of equal importance is the manner of making that appeal.

On first glance it would be thought that the products which appeal specifically and exclusively to men would be marketed by talking points which have specifically and exclusively the masculine appeal. But such is not the case. Men's clothes, as an

instance, are marketed on the talking points, "need for suitable dress," "quality," "style," and similar arguments. These arguments are not the ones appealing merely to men; women are just as much interested in need of suitable dress and the quality and style of the garment worn as are the members of the opposite sex. But the general talking point may be extended, or rather restricted, so as to make an appeal to men along the lines of their exclusive experience:

Clothes are the outward index of the inner man.

The business man who dresses so as to show his inherent neatness and orderliness has just that much advantage over his less careful competitors.

The employee who meets the responsibilities and niceties of good business dress shows to his sharp-eyed employer that he is a man who is liable to meet the niceties and responsibilities of a better position.

More than once has both business and advancement hinged on appearance. And good appearance never handicaps--never holds a man back.

This presentation is good "man copy" for it is based on that universal attribute—the desire to "get on" in business and as an employee. This letter has the right kind of appeal, rightly

HOW DIFFERENT ARGUMENTS APPEAL TO MEN

Price	*Foremost*
Sentiment	*Useless*
Style	*Slight*
Quality	*Important*
Flattery	*Doubtful*
Exclusiveness	*Seldom*
Testimonials	*Effective*
Reputation	*Reassuring*
Service	*Essential*

presented. Compare that letter with the one sent out by a tailor to the professional men of his city:

Dear Sir:

I hope you will excuse the liberty I am taking in addressing you personally, but as it is on a matter that affects you very much and also your profession, I hope you will overlook the familiarity.

As a physician you realize the importance of having good clothes and also of having them kept in good order, both from a social as well as a professional standpoint.

Being situated in your immediate neighborhood and having my store open a greater part of the day, I am sure the proximity will be a great convenience to you.

I have had twenty-seven years' experience in making clothes and cleaning, pressing and repairing them. I do not think you need question my ability to do your work satisfactorily as I have made clothes for some of the most fastidious and aristocratic people in the world.

Sixteen years in London, England, making clothes for Lords, Dukes and other titled people should entitle me to your consideration.

Perhaps you may have some lady friends who need garments remodelled, cleaned, pressed or repaired, who would be glad to know of my shop.

I assure you I will attend to all orders promptly and do your work as you want it.

Yours very truly,

Th. B. Anderson

This letter begins with an apology and there is no inducement to patronize the tailor except his unbacked assertion that he made clothes for "titled people" for sixteen years

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He starts out with an apology and his sentences are involved. His boast about the work he has done for titled nobility abroad indicates that he is a snob—the whole letter lacks conviction.

Sometimes a man-to-man appeal may have the heart interest that strikes a responsive chord.

Dear Mr. Smith:

A statement that every man agrees with. Good description.

An extra pair of dressy, well-made trousers is something every man can use—no matter how many suits he has. Here is an opportunity to get a pair at exceedingly moderate cost.

Effective method of dealing with a real bargain.

You know how we make trousers--what substantial, well-selected patterns we carry; how carefully we cut, so as to get perfect fit in the crotch and around the waist; how we whip in a piece of silk around the upper edge of the waist; put in a strip to protect against wear at the front and back of the leg at the bottom; and sew on buttons so that they won't pull off.

Sending of samples greatly increases power of letter.

Our season is winding up with a lot of patterns on hand containing just enough for one pair or two pairs of "Burnham-made" trousers. See the enclosed sample. There's a good variety in dark patterns and a few light patterns, not a one sold regularly at less than $6.50 and some sold as high as $7.50

This consideration for the old customer is sure to have a good effect.

These remnants won't go into the windows until Saturday morning. We are notifying you, as a regular customer, that as long as these remnants last you can get a pair of trousers from any piece for $5.50, or two pairs at the same time from the same measure for $10--workmanship just the same as if you paid the regular price.

The last half of the closing sentence has much subtle power.

This is a REAL bargain, and we hope to see you before the best of the patterns are picked out.

Truly yours,

THE BURNHAM COMPANY

Here is a letter sent out by a rival tailor. It grips attention in the first sentence and carries conviction. It prompts immediate action and every sentence carries an appeal. Unlike the preceding letter, it does not talk about the writer but about the goods he has for sale—the bargains he offers

The manager and owner of a business which was in immediate need of money had tried out different sales letters with but fair success. His product sold to men; it would stand up under trial; the difficulty lay entirely in awakening interest in a highly competitive product.

As there seemed scarcely a chance that the business might be made to live, the manager decided to take the public into his confidence—partly, perhaps, as extenuation for the failure he saw ahead. So he led out with a sales letter beginning with this appeal:

Suppose you had put every cent of money--every bit of your wide experience--every ounce of energy--into a business, wouldn't you want to see it go--live?

And if you knew--postively knew--that you had the best product of its kind in the world--wouldn't it spur you to still greater efforts--if you knew that there was danger of failure simply because the public was not prompt enough in responding?

You, like hundreds and thousands of others, have had it in mind to buy of me sometime. It is vital to the life of my business that you make that sometime, NOW!

The pulling power of this letter was phenomenal; not only did thirty-five per cent of the list order, but twelve per cent in addition answered, stating that their orders could be depended upon later. In addition, there were scattering letters of encouragement and comment—making the total result a marker in the era of solicitation by mail.

What made this particular letter pull, when dozens of other letters, written by the same man to the same list on the same proposition, had attained only mediocre results?

The last letter made a distinctive appeal—to men—and particularly to men in business. For, since the time of "playing store," every man has met, in its many varied guises, the wolf of Failure—and once a fellow business man is in the same plight, the man who loves fairness will do his part to help out.

That these talking points that appeal to men are efficient is proved by such cases as just cited; once the man-to-man appeal is actually brought out, the response is immediate.

While such appeals occasionally make a ten-strike, the average correspondent must rely upon logic and "reasons why" in making his appeal to men.

The ability to reason from cause to effect, omitting none of the intermediate or connecting steps, has long been held to be

a substantial part of the masculine mind. Orators have found that logic—conviction—may have little or no effect on a feminine audience and yet prove the surest means of convincing an audience of men. School teachers early note that the feminine portion of the school lean towards grammar—which is imitative and illogical—while the boys are generally best in mathematics, which is a hard and fast "rule" study.

Similarly in business, the average man is used to "working with his pencil," and will follow a logical demonstration to the close, where a woman would not give it a passing glance.

One of the latest selling campaigns, marketing town lots in various new towns between St. Paul and the Pacific Coast, appeals to the logical note in the masculine mind, and grants a concession in a follow-up, even before it is asked for. This makes a particularly strong appeal to the man who has begun to think about the proposition and who senses that, somehow, it is not quite logical.

We have a letter from a man who, like you, read our advertisement and sent for more information, including a copy of our contract, and he wrote as follows:

"I don't like the forfeiture clause in your contract. Under it, if a man paid you $950, and then lost his job and couldn't pay any more, you would have the right to gobble up all of his money and keep the lots too. You wouldn't dare to make a contract with me under which as soon as I had paid you $300 you would deed to me the first lot mentioned in my contract--the lot at _____,--and then with each $100 paid in on the contract, deed me the next lot named in my contract. If you would do this, I would take your contract in a minute, because I would have some land for my money I paid in, if I had to quit before I paid you the full $1,000."

We took this man at his word, and have since thought that possibly there were others who regarded our contract as being too severe.

If this was the reason that you did not invest with us, we ask you to examine the enclosed proof sheet, from the printer, of our new contract, and write us not only if it suits you, but if you can think of any other way to make it any more fair and equitable.

The illustration given is particularly good because it is anticipatory—nips an objection that may be just forming in the mind of the prospect.

Appeals to men can be peppered with technical description and still interest and get results. The sales manager of a house selling cameras by mail says, in speaking of this principle:

"We found it necessary to use an entirely different series of letters in selling our cameras to men and to women.

Dear Sir:-

We sent you a sample of our Royal Mixture tobacco in response to your request some time ago. We are anxious to know what you think about it.

This is the best tobacco on the market today at the price, and as we know you would not have asked for a free sample unless you intended to buy more if you liked the sample, we hope to receive your order by return mail.

Very truly,

Morton & Morton

A flat, insipid letter entirely without order-pulling force. The attempt to twist the request for a free sample into an obligation to place an order strokes a man's intentions the wrong way

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"Generally speaking, men are interested in technical descriptions of the parts of the camera; women look at a camera from the esthetic side—as a means to an end.

"In writing a sales letter to a man, I take up, for instance, the lens. This I describe in semi-technical terms, stating why this particular lens or combination of lenses will do the best work. Then follows a description of the shutter—and so on through the principal parts until, if the prospect be seriously interested, I have demonstrated, first, that the camera will do the best work, and, second, that it is good value for the money.

"In writing a letter, under the same conditions, to a woman, I put all technical description in an enclosure or accompanying

Dear Sir:

Well, how did you find the tobacco?

I'm anxious to learn your opinion of Royal Mixture, now that you've burned a bit of it in your pipe.

I believe in this tobacco, and back it up with a guarantee that removes all risk so far as the customer is concerned. I refund money without argument if you are not satisfied.

Royal Mixture is not intended for smokers who are satisfied with any old stuff that will burn and give off smoke. It is used by people who want nothing but the best and know it when they get it. It's the perfection of pipe tobacco.

Men who smoke my Mixture for a month can't come down to common mixtures again. It spoils the taste for cheap tobacco. Smoke a dozen pipes of it and you'll wonder how you ever got any comfort out of ordinary smoking tobacco.

Royal Mixture is skillfully blended from clean, ripe leaves of the very best tobacco grown. It is neither too strong nor too mild--it is precisely what a knowing pipe smoker likes: fragrant, satisfying, delightful to nerves, nostrils and palate.

There's a glorious, natural aroma about Royal Mixture which appeals to a gentleman's nostrils most favorably. Particular pipe smokers praise it in the highest terms, and prove the sincerity of their praise by ordering it from month to month.

Shall I number you among the "regulars?" Remember, you can't buy Royal Mixture from the retail shops. It goes direct from packer to purchaser and reaches you in perfect condition.

The cost is so small, and as you take not a particle of risk but can secure full refund of money if dissatisfied, why hesitate to order? The responsibility is entirely upon me.

Every day you delay ordering means a distinct loss to you of greater pipe pleasure than you have ever experienced.

Won't you sit down now, while the matter is right before you, fill enclosed blank and mail me your order TODAY--THIS MINUTE?

Yours very truly,

L. W. Hamilton

Here is the letter re-written, explaining why this tobacco is superior. The appeal is cleverly worded to flatter the recipient into believing he is one of those who know and demand something a little better than common. The cost is kept in the background by the guarantee of satisfaction and the clincher prompts immediate action

folder and write a personal note playing up the fact that in after years it will be very pleasant to have pictures of self, family, baby, and friends.

"These two appeals are the opposite poles of selling—the one logic and conviction, the other sentiment and persuasion."

Logic and conviction, in fact, are the keynotes to selling men by mail. Men fear being "worked." On those occasions when they have been "worked," it has generally been through sentiment—through the arts of persuasion rather than a clearly-demonstrated conviction that the proposition was right. As a consequence, persuasion alone, without a mass of figures and solid arguments, does not convince a man.

A land company uses a novel method of conviction along this line, aiming to get the prospect to furnish his own figures. The idea is, that these figures, prepared by the prospect himself, and the accuracy of which he himself vouches, will work conviction.

The letter reads in part:

Suppose, ten years ago, you had paid down, say $10 on a piece of cheap land.

Then from time to time you had paid in say $10 per month on the same land. Had you been able to buy then as you can buy from us now, your land would have been secured to you on your first payment.

Now figure out what you would have paid in at $10 per month in ten years. Now, remembering that well-selected land doubles in value once, at least, every five years, what would you be worth now, from your $10-a-month investment?

The letter proved the best puller of a series of try-outs sent to professional men and men on salaries.

Every man has, as a by-product of his every-day experience, certain more or less clearly defined impressions. With some men these are still in a sort of hazy formation; with others these vague ideas are almost a cult. The letter-writer who can tap one of these lines of thought gets results in a flash. Such letter takes a basis of facts common to most men, blends them in the letter written, so as to form fixedly from the *prospect's own*

ideas and experiences, a firm conviction that what the writer is saying is absolute truth. A single sentence that does not ring true to a man's experience is an obstacle over which the message will not carry.

A company selling land in the west, sent out a five-page letter —enough to smother whatever interest might have been attracted by the advertisement. Here is the third paragraph from the letter:

"As you were attracted by this investment opportunity after reading the straight facts regarding it, I have come to believe in your judgment as a careful and prudent person who recognizes the value of a good, permanent, promising investment."

That's enough! It is barely possible that the first few paragraphs might arouse the reader's interest enough to glance through the five pages, but this crude attempt to flatter him is such palpable "bunk" that he is convinced there is not the sincerity back of the letter to make it worth his while—and five pages more are headed for the car-wheel plant.

The "man appeal" is one that draws strongly from man experience. Ambition, responsibility, logical arguments, reasons why—these are the things that the correspondent keeps constantly before him. They all have root in experiences, habits of thought and customs which distinguish men; they are more exclusively masculine attributes that play an important part in the make-up of letters that rivet the attention of busy business men.

How To Write Letters That *Appeal* to FARMERS

THE FARMER *is a producer of necessities, hence he is a shrewd judge of what necessities are. More, he has always in mind a list of necessities that he intends to purchase—when he "can afford it." For this reason the letter that sells goods to him must either stimulate him to an immediate purchase of an article on his "want list," or to displace a necessity that is already there with something MORE necessary. So the letter that sells goods to him must appeal to his needs—and give him detailed specifications to think about*

DOES it appeal to the farmer's need," is the overhead question which is back of all advertising directed at the man living on a farm. It is not necessary to go into proofs; the reasons are apparent.

"All other things being equal," says the chief correspondent for one of the big mail-order houses, "the surest sale is the item that the farmer patron feels he must have. Even after making money enough to be classed well-to-do, the farmer persists in his acquired mental habit—he tests every 'offer' put up to him by his need for it—or rather whether he can get along without it. This predisposition on the part of the audience to which the letter is addressed is to be borne in mind constantly—that the farmer thinks in terms of necessities."

So the mail-order firm shapes its appeal to the farmer, emphasizing the need of the merchandise it is offering, and at the

same time it bears down heavily on the advantages of buying direct.

And while the easiest way to reach the farmer's purse is by appealing to his needs—the practical value of the article or goods advertised—the correspondent must keep constantly in mind the particular manner in which the appeal can best be made. The brief, concise statement that wins the approval of the busy business man would slide off the farmer's mind without arousing the slightest interest. The farmer has more time to think over a proposition—as he milks or hitches up, as he plows or drives to town, there is opportunity to turn a plan over and over in his mind. Give him plenty to think about.

The farmer's mail is not so heavy but what he has time to read a long letter if it interests him, and so the successful correspondent fills two or three pages, sometimes five or six, and gives the recipient arguments and reasons to ponder over during his long hours in the field. One of the most successful men in the mail-order business sometimes sends out a seven-page letter, filled with talking points. "It will save you money"—"I want you to compare the Challenge with other machines"—"Shafting of high carbon steel"—"Gearings set in phosphorus bronze bushings"—"Thirty days' free trial"—"Try it with your money in your own pocket"—"$25,000 guaranty bond"—point after point like these are brought out and frequently repeated for emphasis.

The head of the English department in the university would be pained at the lack of literary quality, but it is a farmer's letter and it follows the grooves of the brain in the man who is going to read its seven pages. And after all, the writer is not conducting a correspondence course in rhetoric; he is selling implements and is not going to chance losing an order because his proposition is not made perfectly clear—because it shoots over the head of the reader. And the correspondent not only tries to make his proposition clear but he tries to get up close to the recipient in a friendly way. The farmer is awed by formalities and so the writer who really appeals to him talks about "You and Me." "You do that and I will do this—then we will both be satisfied." One successful letter-salesman seldom fails to ask some direct question about the weather, the crops, the general outlook, but he knows how to put it so that it does not sound perfunctory and frequently the farmer will reply to this

question without even referring to the goods that the house had written about. Never mind! This letter is answered as promptly and carefully as if it had been an inquiry forecasting a large order.

HOW DIFFERENT ARGUMENTS APPEAL TO FARMERS

Price	*Paramount*
Quality	*Essential*
~~Style~~	~~*Unimportant*~~
Sentiment	~~*Lacking*~~
~~Flattery~~	~~*Useless*~~
~~Exclusiveness~~	~~*Ineffective*~~
Testimonials	*Reassuring*
Reputation	*Valuable*
Utility	*Vital*
Service	*Appreciated*

Such attention helps to win the confidence of the farmer and the knowing correspondent never loses sight of the fact that the farmer is, from bitter experience, suspicious especially of propositions emanating from concerns that are new to him. After one or two satisfactory dealings with a house he places absolute faith in it but every legitimate mail-order concern is handicapped by the fact that unscrupulous firms are continually lying in wait for the unwary: the man with the county rights for a patent churn and his brother who leaves a fanning mill with a farmer to demonstrate and takes a receipt which turns up at the bank as a promissory note are teaching the farmers to be guarded. Many of them can spot a gold brick scheme as soon as it is presented. Therefore the correspondent has to keep before him the fact that the farmer is always wary; his letters must be so worded that no obscure phrase will arouse suspicion; no proposition will admit of two interpretations.

So the guarantee and the free trial offer are essential features in letters that sell the farmer. In hundreds of letters from manufacturers of goods that are sold by mail to the farmer, nearly

every one throws into prominence the guarantee and the free trial offer with money refunded if the purchase does not prove satisfactory.

A manufacturer of farm implements puts this guarantee into the first person effectively.

Such a letter carries conviction; you are impressed by the fact that 40,000 farmers consider this spreader the best; the offer of comparison and demonstration seems conclusive that a comparison is not necessary; you feel that the man who bought a different kind of spreader must have acted hastily without investigating the merits of this particular machine.

The farmer is usually open to conviction but he has to be "shown." After he has had successful dealings with a house for several years he readily accepts its assurance that something is just as good at a less price than what he would buy of a retailer, but he can most easily be won over by strong "why" copy. An educational campaign is almost always necessary for the farmer who has never bought goods by mail; to pull him out of the rut of established custom it is necessary to present facts and figures to convince him that the direct-to-the-consumer method is to his advantage.

To get this to the eye and mind in a striking way is the first requisite.

A Cincinnati firm selling buggies uses a comparative table at the bottom of the first sheet of the first follow-up, as follows:

COST OF RETAIL PLAN		COST OF OUR PLAN	
Actual factory cost of buggy	$43.00	Factory cost	$43.00
Factory selling expense	4.00	Selling expense	4.00
Salesmen's expense	4.50	Our profit	6.75
Factory profit	7.00	OUR SELLING PRICE	$53.75
Retailer's selling expense	5.00		
Retailer's profit	15.00		
DEALER'S SELLING PRICE	$78.50		

This makes the prospect stop and think if not stop and figure.

Another carriage manufacturing company uses a somewhat similar method of comparison but introduces it at a different point. Between the first and second pages of a three-page

follow-up, a sheet in facsimile handwriting is introduced forming a marked comparison, mechanically, to the typewriting preceding and following it:

Problems of Dollars and Cents saving easily solved.
Retail Dealer's plan of figuring selling price.

Actual factory cost of buggy	$46.25
Expense and salary, traveling salesman, about 10%	4.50
Jobber's profit—at least 15%	7.00
Retail dealer's profit (figured very low) . . .	20.00
Losses from bad debts	2.50
RETAIL DEALER'S SELLING PRICE . .	$80.25

My Plan of Figuring Selling Price.

Actual factory cost of buggy	$ 46.25
Expense and salary of traveling salesman . .	nothing
Jobber's profit	nothing
Retail dealer's profit	nothing
Losses from bad debts	nothing
My *one small gross* profit	8.50
MY SELLING PRICE	$54.75

This "saving sheet" can not fail to attract greater attention by means of its form and place of introduction than though it were typewritten and in regular order.

Right-out-from-the-shoulder arguments and facts may also be used to good advantage in handling competition. What the farmer wants is to know whether the other goods are as represented; whether the proposition has any holes in it. If the seller can give him facts that prove his product better than others, honestly and fairly, it does not boost the competitor but helps to sell his own goods.

A cream separator manufacturer claiming a simple machine now presents in his catalogue illustrations of the parts of other machines used in the actual separation of the cream from the milk. This comparison shows that his machine has fewer parts and consequently will stay in repair longer and clean easier—two important talking points.

Where a competing firm enters the field with a cheap quality of goods that would react against the trade, it is sometimes policy to put the facts before the prospective buyers.

This was done by a Winnipeg manufacturer of metal culverts after the following plan:

"Last May a firm manufacturing metal goods attempted to enter the culvert field in Western Canada. We sent out a letter to every Councilor in Manitoba and Saskatchewan showing the weakness of its culverts. It looks as though our letter settled all chance of selling the kind of culvert it was making, for it immediately quit the campaign for business. We do not think a single culvert was sold.

"The same company is again making an effort to enter the field, and we would be pleased to see it get a nice business if it sold a good culvert, but as long as it sells anything like the one now advertised we shall most vigorously oppose it because we are certain the culverts will not give satisfaction, and that will mean purchasers will be very much disappointed, and will have a tendency, as a result, to be opposed to all metal culverts; their disappointment will be so great that it will react against our company.

"Look at the illustration in the magazines of the nestable culvert--a man is pinching the metal on the lower section of the culvert back upon itself. There are very few machine shops in the country in which the heavy metal we use could be bent. At any rate, to bend back our metal, you would require a machine shop wherever you were doing your road work. Take a sledge hammer the next time you see one of our culverts and prove to yourself the task that would be before you to bend our culverts. You simply could not do it."

The farmer who receives such a letter, if not entirely convinced, is at least reasonably certain to make an investigation before placing an order with the firm selling culverts that can be bent by hand. And it is probably a good thing for the mail-order business that such efforts are being made to protect the public against inferior goods.

Experience has shown that while offers to the farmer must be clear cut, the chances of pulling an order are increased if he is given a number of options as to price, plan of payment and different kinds of items open to purchase. He does not like to be restricted to one particular item, or one arbitrary form of payment. This fact was long ago recognized by the large catalogue houses, for they aim to offer several kinds and sizes under every item listed. It has been found that where both

the number of items and options in a line is doubled or otherwise substantially increased, that the percentage of sales immediately increases.

A company in Canton, Ohio, putting out a line of sprayers, offers on the back of its order sheet four sprayers of different prices and four forms of making payment for each sprayer. This gives the prospect sixteen options—one of which will look best to him, when he sends in his order.

This information is printed on the back of the order sheet, where it can not get separated from it and where it will have a "last appeal."

The mail-order houses have been vieing with each other in trying to find unique appeals to the farmer. To this end profit-sharing plans and various premium schemes have been introduced, in some cases with phenomenal results.

While the farmer is no different from the ordinary public in wanting to get his money's worth he is open to conviction through smaller devices than is his city brother. And the "novelty device" appeals to him strongly.

An Ohio company putting out buggies as a main product, adds an insurance policy as a clincher. The purchaser is himself insured for one hundred dollars payable to his heirs in case of his death; the buggy carries an indemnity—not to exceed fifty dollars—covering accidents along the line of breakage or damage in accidents or smash-ups. This insurance, under the policy given, is kept in force a year.

This extra not only acts as a sales argument but a basis for a talk like this:

"The S. & W. pleasure vehicles have been tested by insurance company officials. They have been proved practically unbreakable, the material and durability surprising the insurance officials. Insurance is not issued on sickly persons, weak buildings nor on inferior vehicles. It is because our vehicles are so well made that insurance is permitted."

This makes a convincing talking point, particularly to the man who is not familiar with accident indemnity, and to the young man who is about to buy a "rig" in which he may attempt to demonstrate that no other man can pass him on the road.

When it comes to framing up a campaign there are many points, minor in themselves, but each having its significance, that it is well to consider. It frequently happens that not enough attention is paid to the stationery that is used for farmers, but all these things have their influence in prejudicing the recipient for or against a new house.

"It is a good rule in writing the farmer to diversify your stationery," says a mail-order man who has sold a wide range of specialties. "The reason for this lies in the fact that when a farmer has been drummed about so much he may grow resentful at the persistence. We aim, not only to present the proposition very differently each time, but we use different size envelopes, different letterheads and markedly different enclosures in each follow-up.

"Particularly along rural routes, where the men folks are in the field when the carrier comes, I aim to change envelopes and letterheads. I never want the housewife to be able to say to the man of the house when he asks what mail came, that 'There's another letter from the firm that's trying to sell you a cream separator'."

To make ordering easier and to get the farmer to "act now" a coupon or an enclosed postal card, good for a limited number of days is widely used. This makes it easier to send for catalogue or a free trial or whatever is advertised. It is a spur to action and results in adding to the mailing list, names of many persons who might never respond if they had to wait until they found pen or pencil and paper—and a convenient opportunity.

A rebate check is another popular scheme for inducing the customer to order. An old mail-order house calls attention in the first form letter sent out with a catalogue to the fact that accompanying it is a check for one dollar to apply on the first order.

This order is made out in the form of a personal check, filled in with the prospect's name. It is, to all intents and purposes, a personal check, only payable in goods instead of cash.

Similar use of the check method of exciting interest is also used by a Detroit incubator manufacturer, who finds that many who have resisted other appeals answer to the chance to convert a check into a saving.

This same firm also adds as a clincher an offer to pay the freight on certain lines of goods, so that the catalogue price becomes actual cost instead of cost plus freight charges.

Such inducements come home to the farmer; anything on the "something-for-nothing" order appeals to him.

Aside from the nature of the proposition and the way it is presented, there is the all-important element of seasonableness. The man who has always lived in the city might understand the general principles of mail-order selling and have a good proposition, but his success would be indifferent unless he understood the meaning of timeliness in reaching the farmer. If your letter or advertisement catches the eye of the farmer he will in all probability put it away in the shoe box back of the chimney until ready to buy; it would be almost impossible to train enough guns on him during the rush season to force his interest. It is a common experience with mail-order houses to receive replies to letters or advertisements six months or a year after they are sent out—sometimes years afterwards. The message was timely; it wormed its way into the farmer's "mental want list" and blossomed forth when he felt that he could afford the article.

Only a carefully kept record-of-returns sheet or book will show when sales can best be made on a particular item, and the shrewd manager will test out different items at different seasons before launching a big campaign which may be ill-timed.

"The winter months are the best time for comprehensive information to soak in—but the letter generally is not the place for this. Put personality in the letter—specifications in the circular." This is the advice of an experienced correspondent whose length of service enables him to speak authoritatively.

"A winter letter may be long, verbose and full of interesting information; the farmer will read it carefully. This is the time to get in specifications, estimates, complicated diagrams and long arguments which require study. Letters for the work months need to be short and snappy, both to insure reading and to act on a tired mind."

And then finally the proposition must be made so plain that there is no possibility of its being misinterpreted. What a city man who is a wide reader gets at a glance, the ordinary farm owner or farmer's boy—often with only a rudimentary knowledge of English—must study over.

"So needful is the observance of this principle in our business," says this manager, "that our sales letters have come to be almost a formula. First we state our proposition. We then proceed to take up each element of the offer and make it as plain and plausible as possible."

In this case the elements are:

1. The thing offered.
2. Time of trial.
3. Freight paid.
4. Return privilege.

"All the letter is a plain exposition of 1, 2, 3, 4—the preceding paragraphs are summarized and connected. For instance, after the item offered has been treated and the length of trial made clear, the two are summarized thus:

"The separator we offer is not only the best that money can buy but it is just what you need--no wonder we are willing to give you 30 days in which to try it.

"But what about freight?

"Just this."

"Then we explain freight paid and return privilege. This gives a continuous and increasing summary straight through the letter, which closes with a recapitulation of the proposition.

"The aim of putting several summaries of the proposition in all sales matter is so that there can be no possible mistake about the proposition, for thousands of propositions are turned down by people on farms simply because the reader does not quite understand everything."

The farmer is in constant dread of "being caught" and there is little likelihood of his taking advantage of any offer that is not absolutely clear in his mind. The letter writer must realize what a point this is with the average farmer. What a city man does he can keep to himself; if he buys a gold brick he gets rid of it and forgets the transaction just as quickly as possible. But what the farmer does is neighborhood gossip. If one of those "slick city fellers" sells him something he can't use, every one knows it.

Make the proposition clear—so clear that every one in the family can understand it, for usually purchases are talked over for days before an order is finally sent out. Take into account the farmer's suspicious nature and bear down heavily on the utility of the article. There is no hidden mystery in reaching the rural prospects but they must be handled with discretion and with an understanding of the prejudices, characteristics and viewpoints of the farmer.

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